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JOURNAL OF
LOCAL ADMINISTRATION
OVERSEAS

Volume II · Number 2 · April 1963

Editor's Notes

AN ARTICLE on land reform in Egypt in this issue completes a trilogy on this theme.[1] At this point it may be timely to invite the reader's attention briefly to some points of similarity and of difference between the three countries as described by our three separate contributors.

The traditional land system in Egypt, as in India and Japan, contained obstacles to economic development in the prevalence of monopoly in land-ownership and the keeping of the rural population on a low level of income and status. In all three countries land reform has been carried out by expropriating land from large estates, on payment of compensation by the State acting as an intermediary, and redistributing it to small-scale farmers and the landless. These reforms have had varying degrees of success, but the articles indicate that there have been many common problems, such as how to devise safeguards to overcome the evasive tactics of landlords, the satisfactory enforcement of legislation with a limited supply of suitable officials, peasants ignorant of their rights, the settlement of surplus rural population on new land or their absorption into industry, and the provision of security of tenure and rent control for the residual mass of tenants otherwise unaffected by the reform.

The article on Japan suggested that these problems have been much less serious there, and a greater number of people have benefited in consequence. Land holdings which owners may keep for themselves have been fixed at a lower ceiling (generally between 6 and 15 acres) than in Egypt and India. The primary aim has been the removal of social inequalities, with improved production as a side-effect; redistribution has not meant a change in the pattern of cultivation, but of ownership. In India, the first aim has been increased efficiency and productivity, and the second the elimination of exploitation and injustice. Egypt started with land reform as a social and political measure, but this, as Dr. Warriner explains, has since evolved into an agricultural policy. The problem of reconciling the objectives of a greater equality of distribution with increased productivity is being met by the creation of supervised co-operative societies, membership of which is obligatory for all recipients of land. Thus individual ownership is secured but under official management which ensures technical

[1] *Observations on Land Reform Administration in Egypt* by Dr. Doreen Warriner, p. 100. See also *Land Reform in India* by Dr. Vera Anstey, *J.L.A.O.*, Vol. 1, No. 2, April 1962, p. 88; and *The Administration of the Japanese Land Reform* by Mr. R. P. Dore, *J.L.A.O.*, Vol. 1, No. 4, October 1962, p. 231.

and financial supervision, and co-operative marketing; nevertheless, the reform does not mark the first step towards collectivization, any more than it does in India and Japan, but is an attempt to instil fresh hope and effort into the minds of the peasants.

Much of the success of any land reform policy must depend on the calibre of the local administration; each country is evolving its own pattern. Japan has had a tradition of bureaucracy down to the village level, where representative land committees were readily formed to facilitate the changes in land-ownership. India requires thousands of minor officials whom it has been difficult to imbue with the right spirit; legislation, enacted by states, not in New Delhi, has been slow to follow the central Government's advice and has left many loopholes. The Egyptian programme had a confused start caused by inter-departmental rivalry and an often clumsy administration inherited from a recent feudal past. These difficulties are being overcome there by placing sole responsibility for the administration of the reforms in the hands of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, by setting up a training course for co-operative managers and fostering the participation of the peasants in their own development through the 'supervised' co-operative movement.

All the contributors suggest that redistribution of land has been a necessary first step towards rural regeneration, but that it needs to be accompanied by other measures to ensure successful development in the less-favoured areas of the world. Egyptian experience reveals the merits of a broader post-war conception of land reform to include, for example, the provision of agricultural supervision and credit, often available in the past from former landlords, the establishment of a co-operative society or other agency to facilitate the distribution of seed, pesticide and fertiliser and to arrange the marketing of crops, controls to prevent fragmentation into uneconomic holdings, and irrigation and settlement schemes to open up more land to feed an exploding population.

Urgent Local Government Problems in Africa[1]

by C. A. G. Wallis

Local Government Adviser, Department of Technical Co-operation

Introduction

Every African country, whether its independence is longstanding, recent or imminent, is now set upon a course of material and social development and must have access to the best knowledge and skill of countries which have already travelled along this course. These, the so-called developed countries, wish to encourage and help African countries to the best of their ability, but there are two preliminary difficulties. The first is that, if modern works and services are to be planned, carried out, paid for, maintained and enjoyed, there must be administrative institutions which are not only stable in themselves, but are so staffed as to ensure that an orderly programme may be followed, project after project and year after year. The second preliminary difficulty arises from the first. It is that this sort of administrative institution which is, technologically speaking, essential, is still quite foreign to the thought of large sections, if not to the majority, of the population. To a very large number of Africans the problems of administrative organization and the enjoyment of amenities common in more developed countries have no meaning. Until they become aware not only of their needs but what they might do to satisfy them, they are usually content to be 'governed' by some chief or elder (himself probably governed by some superior chief) provided always that the relationship between governed and governor remains personal and not official.

An essential condition of all social and economic development may therefore well be the establishment of a system of local administration which, while providing for such development, may yet win, not alienate, the support of those to whom it is still a strange idea. This system, under the name of local government, is the subject of this article.

Historical

Local government was not introduced into Africa – apart from certain towns and districts occupied mainly by non-Africans – in response to popular demand, but in many territories as an act of colonial policy. The policy arose from the conviction that the old indigenous forms of tribal authority were too exclusive, too conservative, too inward looking ever to be able to satisfy the demands of militant nationalism on the one hand and of economic development on the other, and also from the belief that the only possible alternative, government by a corps of central agents operating in every locality however small, was a denial of the system by which the colonial powers themselves lived.

The liberal case for local government as an essential part of democratic government, though of perfect validity, is a later rationalization made in

[1] This article was originally prepared by Mr. Wallis as a paper which was presented to the Seminar on Urgent Administrative Problems of African Governments, convened by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and held at Addis Ababa from 2-12 October 1962. Permission to publish the article is gratefully acknowledged.

developed countries. Unfortunately many Africans, and many Europeans also, have turned the arguments upside down. Noting that countries which were both democratic and developed had some system of local government, they have mistakenly supposed that a system of established local government could be imported and would inevitably lead both to democracy and to development. Disappointment has followed, and, from some quarters, the cry that an alien system can have no permanent place in an African country. Disappointment, however, has not led African governments on reflection to reject local government but rather to seek ways of acclimatizing and adapting it to local conditions.

It is well therefore at this time to consider in a realistic way what the future role of local government should be in Africa and to take stock of the administrative problems that lie ahead.

Definitions

Some definition of terms is essential, since local government is a vague expression which can bear a variety of meanings depending on the context in which it is used.[2] The expression is used for present purposes to describe a system of decentralization of government in which many of the tasks of government are distributed among units separated both physically and organizationally from the central government departments. Local government is the term which signifies the system in the abstract. The separate units, in this specialized vocabulary, are normally not called local governments but local authorities. It is part of the definition that a local authority is made up of the adult residents of the area if it is small enough, otherwise of representatives of the inhabitants of the area; it must therefore usually be a council. The question whether these representatives should be elected or otherwise locally selected is of such importance as to be worth an article to itself. It is mentioned here but not discussed since it would be difficult to deal with it adequately within the limits of this article. The council of the local authority is usually established by a law passed by the central legislature. Its powers and the way it exercises those powers may be prescribed either by the constitution or by law.

This description of local authorities excludes all agencies of the central Government operating locally such as are found in every African country, since no state is so small that all the policy-making and administrative functions of government can be concentrated in the capital town. However, central administration carried out locally is not local government. The description of local authorities also excludes the component regions or states of a federation, partly because of scale (local government is essentially small scale), partly because no element of sovereignty is normally found in local government (local government powers are essentially administrative or ancillary to administration). It is important to make this clear, since there are several governing authorities existing somewhat apart from their central government which would not be local authorities within the meaning of this article. Examples are the Government of Buganda in Uganda, the larger native authorities in Northern Nigeria, the provincial administrations in the Sudan and the various statutory boards and commissions which are to be found in most countries.

[2] The term 'local government' has been defined within the United Nations to refer to a political subdivision or (in a federal system) state which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the power to tax. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected.

The need for local government

The two most pressing needs of all African governments are, first, to forge or maintain the political unity of the nation, and, second, to force the pace of economic development.

Within these broad aims every government is aware that in every part of its domains countless decisions of both a policy-making and an administrative kind have to be made every day. Who is to make these decisions and how they are to be carried out are two questions which cannot remain unanswered. The first question may be approached from another angle: what sort of decision is best made by a single person and what sort by a body of persons, a council?

The impatient may think that the quickest means of achieving both aims is a highly centralized administrative service with full powers. They will answer that central officials must make all the decisions in their sole responsibility. The more discerning will perceive that, though centralized administration may serve well for certain functions or isolated projects, a system of decentralized administration, in which the greatest possible freedom of choice is allowed to local communities, will arouse and nourish a wider and more lasting interest in and support for these aims among the people as a whole.

Though loyalty is felt (in some cases surprisingly) to some of the old colonial administrative boundaries within a country, there have already been several instances of fragmentation. More may follow (and who knows where they will end?) unless there is an administrative system designed to help forward the reverse process of merging narrower into wider loyalties. It is not usually safe to generalize about such large matters but whereas the former colonial governments could afford to decentralize or even neglect political control, they kept a very tight control over administration. Good administration within a limited range of functions was the purpose and justification of most colonial administrators in the field. National governments on the other hand, being faced by a number of movements which are potentially separatist, will pay first attention to ensuring by all means that local authorities keep politically in step with the centre. If they have ensured this, they are likely to proceed more boldly than colonial governments with administrative devolution to local authorities.

Of all the systems of local administration local government is well adapted to serve both these purposes, political and administrative, and its present strength in many African countries lies in the fact that it is, so to speak, in position. The main outlines of the system where it had a start during the colonial period are understood by most people and much of the initial organization has been done. Its weakness on the other hand lies more on the human side: the persons who man local authorities have not fully realized their possibilities. It is an element of strength that, as a system, local government is capable of infinite progress: it is not restricted in advance by any tribal, racial or religious limits. It is an element of weakness that it is not a fully satisfying system: it does not yet command the full trust of the central Government nor the affection of the whole population, and it lacks the strength financially and technically to take on important tasks. In order to attain full strength local government must have the support not only of the local people but also of the central Government, which probably means, as has already been suggested, political unity or at least the absence of conflict between central and local government. The idea that local government can ever be a political counterweight to the central Government, if this means that it can be in outright political opposition to the centre, is not likely to find any favour in Africa. On the other hand local government

will not satisfy the people if it becomes merely an extension of the central Government. Local authorities may however work out a useful role for themselves between these extremes.

The size of local government authorities

Hitherto, in the absence of full understanding of the process of acclimatizing local government in Africa, the size of local authorities has often been determined subjectively. For instance, those who believed in democracy at the grass roots have left behind scores and hundreds of local authorities based upon the area of day to day social cohesion, but far too small for any effective action, though they may have value as public debating societies. Again, those who believed in ethnic cohesion have left behind some groupings large enough to be a danger to national unity. Thirdly, those who looked for financial strength have left behind some groupings that are so extensive as to have forfeited any claim to be called local.

African governments, mindful of their chief preoccupations, are unlikely in future to allow any local government authorities to be established which are so small as to be unable to contribute anything to the general development of the country or so large as to be a potential threat to unity. They may however, while avoiding the latter danger, still insist upon largeness because it seems to them to be the only way of making effective, by concentration, their scant resources of men, money and equipment. If so, they may fall into the same error as some of their predecessors; by gaining some advantages, they will lose others no less necessary to the whole nature of local government. A high-handed alteration of boundaries and the compulsory consolidation of small units, merely in order to make a large unit, may violate so many local feelings as to render the resultant large unit incapable of harmonious working.

When resistance to a proposed change of this sort is felt, an impartial enquiry should be held as soon as possible and both sides should meanwhile refrain from pressing their point or it will become polarized between such pairs of opposites as nationalist and tribalist, educated and uneducated, townsman and countryman. The starting point for such an impartial enquiry must be a realization that many people in the country still think of themselves and their community as indivisible whereas in the thinking of the government a man can be differentiated according to the particular situation in which he is studied. Thus, for example, he can be considered now as a tribesman, now as a taxpayer, now as a farmer, now as a voter, now as a local councillor. The tribesman however cannot possibly imagine such differentiation nor accept that, for the purposes of local government, he can be represented by anyone other than a fellow tribesman. He will thus fight to retain the identity of his own unit however small. It must be observed here that often units which protest against consolidation on the grounds that they will lose their identity are really moved by the fear that they will suffer economically or socially when merged into an enlarged local authority. If such cases can be recognized some simple safeguards will generally dilute too strong an affection for the *status quo*.

The relations of local authorities with one another

There comes a time or a place however when even the greatest efforts fail to secure the establishment of a single local authority that is right for area and right for population or one that can stand without any other authority between it and the central Government. Then the need arises to establish more than one

local authority in a single area: one to administer major services throughout the whole area, another or others to administer minor services in a part or parts of the area. When there are more than one local authority in a single area their relationship with one another must be made clear.

One arrangement or structure of local authorities is that the minor or lower councils are constituted by the major or higher councils and receive all their powers by delegation from the major councils. This is sometimes known as the pyramid structure.

Another structure is that all councils are constituted and receive their powers in the same way by the same law. They are thus of equal status and differentiated only by the nature of the powers given to them and the area over which these powers may be exercised. This has been called the tier structure, although this name conveys no particular meaning. The real difference is that the minor councils are not subordinated to the major councils as they are in the pyramid system.

It is, however, coming to be realized in many countries that there is an upper limit of size and population even to a major authority if it is to retain its special usefulness of being local. Between this upper limit of local government and central government, there is often a wide and obvious administrative gap. Much thought is being given to filling this gap, and various experimental provincial, regional, or area institutions have been established. Their status and function have not everywhere been precisely determined, but a common characteristic is that they enable central and local resources to be interlocked in a more profitable way than is possible without them.

Relations of local authorities with government

The relation of the central government with local authorities, if not fixed in the constitution, will be regulated by a law, which in effect means that the relation will be just what the laws say it is at any given time. There is scope for great variation here between countries and even within a single country. It is quite unprofitable to single out and to copy the relationship that exists today in any developed country because this has evolved within the political philosophy of a particular nation. What is required is that the relationship in any country should be fashioned in such a way as to allow local communities as much freedom of choice as possible in matters concerning their own administration. This is the great principle of local government, yet it is idle to imagine that it can be enacted otherwise than in accordance with the political aims of the nation. Assuming that the political resolve exists to decentralize government and allow some freedom of choice to localities, central/local relations should be worked out internally and not by appealing externally to so-called orthodox models elsewhere. Nor, on the local government side, should too much play be made with the idea of local autonomy: from the centre this can look too much like the beginnings of separatism. Most observers will agree that in all African countries today the conditions in which alone local government will thrive and develop are close supervision and instruction.

In some countries local authorities have been used as electoral colleges to form the central assembly. Although in theory there is much to commend this link, in practice it has been found that the status and effectiveness of local government are reduced if the councils are composed of those who have no wish to be on them but are there chiefly because they aspire to or have failed to secure further election to the central assembly. Nevertheless in certain countries,

where elections have been discontinued because of past failures of the representative system, it is noteworthy that the new governments seek to rebuild their constitutions by means of indirect elections from local authorities.[3] It will never be known whether perseverance with indirect elections would have averted the breakdown of the representative system.

Even where elections to central and to local government are direct and separate, it is sometimes provided that members of the central assembly are made members of their local authority *ex officio*. This again seems an admirable link in theory, but in practice has some disadvantages, not the least of which is that it could turn the member into an apologist for the local authority instead of being its critic or partner.

Relations between councils and staff

The relation between the council and the staff of a local authority is a matter of the highest importance and should not be left to chance if foresight can suggest some precautionary measures. The chief cause of misunderstanding is that in any local authority councillors are brought into direct contact with the professional heads of departments in a way that is not possible in central government, where a political minister is interposed between the assembly and the officials. There have been several cases where local councillors have regarded themselves as rulers and the staff as hirelings bound to do whatever the councillors say. What is needed is a system which makes such a relationship impossible. It is necessary that the staff should be protected against any arbitrary or capricious act of the council, and still more of any individual councillor.

This could be done in various ways. The duties of the chief officers could be specified, useful conventions could be codified, or the staff, instead of deriving their powers from the council, could have them conferred direct by law. The separation of deliberative or policy-making powers from administrative powers has been made in some countries which have had a long experience of local government. Sometimes the separation is real as where the administrative power is vested in a mayor elected separately from the council. Sometimes the separation is nominal as where the council delegates all its administrative powers to a career official known as the council manager. Whether it would be advantageous in some African countries is a question well worth studying. Lastly, some delaying procedure might be introduced. At all costs local government must be prevented from degenerating into a series of snap decisions taken on the floor of the council chamber for execution by the (possibly reluctant) staff.

The erroneous idea that the staff are hirelings of the council has been mentioned above and the correct position has been stated, namely, that they form the permanent civil service of the area. Viewed in this light, they are by no means susceptible to summary appointment and dismissal like daily paid workmen. The idea that they are in any way beholden for their posts to the partiality of the council is also obnoxious. Such mistaken ideas are the result of copying what was thought to be the practice in some developed countries at an early stage in the growth of their local government institutions and of an erroneous interpretation of the proper tasks of local government. A natural consequence has been that in many countries the staff of local authorities are underqualified, underpaid, insecure and without career prospects. What system of local government can survive with such a handicap?

[3] E.g. Pakistan, Sudan.

If local government is to help with the development of a country, it must not only have money, but skill also. It takes skilled people, that is people who are professionally or technically qualified, to utilize properly the public money which has been allocated for technical services. Since to the spending of public money is added the need first to plan and estimate the expenditure and later to account for it, professional administrative and financial officers are also called for in addition to the skilled technical officers. It is imperative, therefore, in any country where there is as yet no sort of equation between the supply of qualified persons and the demand for them, that some order be introduced into the recruitment, employment, promotion and superannuation of local authority staff. In some countries governments have reserved to themselves the right to appoint, transfer and discipline the chief executive officers of local authorities. In others, statutory staff regulations have been made, binding all local authorities. In yet others, the local government service is being unified and, since there may be some suspicion of political interference, placed under the control of a local service commission.

This tendency seems to be gaining acceptance and is one well suited to conditions in Africa. It has, however, already given rise to two questions. Local authority staff are joining trade unions, and occasionally they will have a dispute with their employers. Who is the employer, for the purposes of a trade dispute, of an employee appointed by and dismissible by a local service commission, but nominally employed and paid by a local authority? The second question arises from the wish to make the local service commission as nearly independent as possible of political pressure. How far can this independence be pushed without interfering with the general responsibility of the minister of local government?

Training of staff

A bad council with good staff will probably do more good than a good council with bad staff. A permanent staff of qualified, contented and secure officers should be the aim. The unification of at least the senior posts in local government under a local service commission may be the best way to achieve it. It is no part of local government that councils should endlessly debate and quarrel over appointments, rates of pay, and similar matters. This is not what local government is for and if major staff matters are taken out of the councils' hands, they will to that extent have more time to debate matters of real importance.

In order to secure a steady supply of staff, there must be a selection and training plan. In some countries local authorities have been allowed to appoint whom they will at what salaries they will, without regard to the responsibilities of the post and the qualifications needed for it. In other countries governments have analysed the various kinds of posts needed by local authorities, laid down the qualifications for them and the salary ranges applicable to such qualifications. Then they have fixed an establishment of posts, with all these attendant conditions, for each individual local authority. Where no one can be found to fulfil the requirements, either because of a shortage or because none of those qualified is acceptable to the council, only acting appointments are allowed. Where the council is genuinely unable to pay the salary fixed for the post, a special grant-in-aid is forthcoming from the government. Where this system is followed it is relatively easy to work out the numbers of those who must be trained each year for each grade of post and to select the men.

As to the content of training, this in nearly all African countries will have to

include for many years what is really better described as education. Allowing for this, a man may be trained about local government, or in local government, or for local government. Training about local government may include instruction in its history, its philosophy and its law. Training in local government may include the equivalent of industrial apprenticeship. Training for local government may include such things as practical surveying and typewriting. It seems necessary to describe the concept of training in this way as a corrective to loose thinking leading to the establishment of expensive but ill thought-out schools and institutes, offering general courses in local government.

Training of councillors

The training of councillors should not be neglected. Although they come and go with greater frequency than the staff, there is much scope for offering them not education, but training in the strict sense of the term; training in the conduct of meetings, training in methods of communication with constituencies, training in their relationship with the staff. If positive training is neglected, and councillors are left to pick up practice from their older colleagues, they may be in danger of perpetuating bad habits.

Training the public

Nor should public information be neglected. The whole process of local government is relatively new in Africa. If local government is to thrive, it is necessary that all parties to it, the public no less than the councillors and the staff, should know how it is established, the way it does its work, and the way it can be corrected if it falls into error.

Capital expenditure

The farmer who has no resources must borrow his seed and live in debt until he can reap his harvest. The only way in which he can develop his farm and expand it is by saving some of his crop beyond what he consumes and puts by for next year's seed. This is nature's cycle, and, if applied to local government, it means that if a local authority is to increase and not merely to subsist, if it is to create new services as well as maintain existing ones, if, in short, it is to participate in the general development of the country it, like the farmer, must start in debt and strive for surpluses by budgeting year after year for an excess of income over expenditure. However, development through savings is necessarily a slow process. Further, in the case of local government, it is an unfair process, because it puts a levy upon the present generation to pay for some installation which will be enjoyed mainly by the generation to come. The natural cycle has therefore been reversed and it has long been the practice in developed countries for local authorities to borrow a large part of their capital requirements.

Loan finance has two special demands. On the one hand the borrowing authority must be credit-worthy. This means that it must have a stable system of budgeting and accounting and must be able to absorb in its recurrent expenditure the sums of money required to service the loan. On the other hand there must be a lending institution which is attuned to the needs of local government and has a positive wish to help them. In almost no case will it be possible for governments to allow their local government authorities to have direct access to the capital market and the lending institutions will have to be both established and controlled by the government.

In some countries there is provision for local authorities to borrow money

from banks, usually by way of overdraft. In such cases it should be made clear that all such loans must be secured without priority against all the revenue and assets of the local authority. In the absence of such a provision, a few cases have arisen where local government authorities have been required to mortgage particular pieces of property or to deposit their investments as security for the overdrafts, in both cases thus being compelled in effect to grant priority. This practice is an outgrowth of private loans and does not seem suitable for local authorities.

Recurrent expenditure

Local responsibility is generally taken to mean that a local authority must have some financial responsibility. It is often added that financial responsibility implies the right and duty to levy a local tax. In most cases, however, central governments have already pre-empted all the worthwhile taxable resources, and what is left is inadequate for local government if it is to undertake increased responsibilities. In these circumstances local authorities must rely to a very large extent on grants from the government which, since they come from funds provided by the taxpayers at large, will carry with them considerable central control. There is always the danger that too much control from the centre will undermine the initiative and, consequentially, the vitality of local government, and to prevent this there may be a good case for the re-allocation of tax powers between central and local government.

Local authorities in new countries are not, however, in a good position as yet to claim wider tax powers, because for the most part they have not themselves developed proper methods of taxation. There are only isolated cases where progress has been made beyond the primitive poll-tax at a flat rate. An equitable method of local taxation must be worked out to provide for individual assessment based on a combination of a person's ability to pay and the amount of benefit he receives from the activities of the local authority. The most healthy effect of a local tax of this sort is that it compels the council each year to balance its estimates by a clear-cut decision, either to raise the level of the tax or to cut out some of the proposed expenditure. Budgeting in this way, for expenditure first and revenue second, concentrates and illuminates all the ingredients of representative responsibility.

Other methods of financing local authorities, such as the assignment of the proceeds of certain central taxes, may have their place. However, since the levels of assigned taxes are not under the control of the local authority, the local authority is compelled to estimate the revenue first and then to plan the expenditure accordingly. This is the reverse process of budgeting from that which is usual when there is a truly local tax, and calls for less responsibility on the part of the local authority. The responsibility could be restored to some extent if a tax is shared and the local government portion is separately levied by the local councils.

Whatever tax revenue is available to local authorities it will rarely, if ever, suffice for their needs. Some grants from the centre will be necessary in addition. Grants are of three kinds, the specific grant, the block grant and the equalizing grant. The specific grant is used to aid the local authority to expand some service which the government considers nationally important. The block grant is not earmarked and gives that much extra power of choice to the local authority. Also, it must be added, it signifies that local government by its past performance has won that much extra confidence from the central Govern-

ment. The equalizing grant, or deficiency grant, as it is sometimes called, is designed to bring all local authorities up to the same starting-point of financial strength. There are always areas which are naturally richer or poorer than the mean. The application of any grant formula to these exceptional areas without prior equalization usually has the result of making the rich areas relatively richer and the poor areas relatively poorer, thus widening the gap between different parts of a country. Objective surveys, both of the present financial conditions and of the prospects, are a necessary condition of an equitable system of local finance.

Financial administration

There are two aspects of financial administration, management and control. Management requires that there shall be a proper complement of staff qualified to handle the money, to account for it, to plan the disposition of it. Control requires that there shall be both internal and external checks against negligence and fraud.

The three divisions of management call for different qualifications in the staff employed in them. The collectors or cashiers who actually handle money need a technical skill which can, however, be acquired by practice. The accountants or book-keepers require technical knowledge in addition to technical dexterity. The financial officer or treasurer requires the power of judgment in addition to technical knowledge. In small local authorities the chief administrative officer may also exercise the functions of chief financial officer or treasurer, but when the budget turnover is very large, it is better to separate the functions and employ a qualified treasurer. A general administrator is not usually qualified to administer very large sums of money to best advantage.

Internal control is helped by a division of duties which will prevent the same official from both handling and accounting for money. It will be advantageous also to standardize the system of local estimating and accounting throughout a country. There is no virtue in a diversity of administrative or financial machinery, any more than, as has already been suggested, in a diversity of staffing arrangements. It is much easier to maintain a running system of internal audit within a standardized system.

The external audit is something different. Local authorities are public bodies spending public funds and should therefore be financially accountable to the public for any culpable negligence in collecting money which is due, and for any expenditure which is not authorized by law. The only means for bringing faults of this nature to public notice is a report by an outside auditor. In some countries the auditor is required by law to impose a surcharge upon any local councillor or official who is implicated in the fault. More usually, however, in Africa the surcharge is not automatic: the auditor makes a recommendation and the decision to impose a surcharge rests with the minister. The knowledge that culpable financial mistakes cannot be concealed nor escape retribution has a powerful controlling effect.

Central Institutions

Given that governments are animated by the desire to create a sense of nationhood and to promote social and economic development that shall be general throughout the country and not merely confined to the capital towns, there is no alternative to deliberate decentralization and that to an increasing extent. Nevertheless it is not safe to let decentralization take its own course for

it can easily take the road which leads to anarchy or separatism. If governments are persuaded of the need to decentralize they will do well to show a creative attitude towards local government and to adopt a positive policy of encouraging local initiative rather than a negative policy of restraining it. This may sound no more than a truism but experience has shown that the central departments can be loud in their praises of local government so long as the argument is general but are most reluctant when it comes to decentralizing any part of their work to local authorities. They have to be pushed all the time and the only agency with both the authority and the knowledge to do this is a separate ministry or department exclusively dedicated to local government. This department will be responsible for initiating all legislation affecting local government, for establishing codes of administrative and financial practice, and for inspecting the work of individual local authorities. It may also be useful at the present time, when local authorities cannot themselves find qualified legal or financial officers, for the department of local government to employ such officers on its own establishment and to lend them on secondment to local authorities.

A question which has arisen in some countries is whether it is better to have separate departments at the centre for urban and rural local government or whether to combine them in one department. Historically the development of local government on an African base has taken place mainly in the rural areas, whereas in the towns the base has usually been non-African. There are not many places of which it can be said that they are at once urban (in the modern sense) and African and it may be for this reason that outwardly urban and rural local government seem different subjects. Nevertheless, as political integration proceeds and urban local government takes on more and more of an African character the difference between it and rural local government will be seen to be one of degree rather than of kind. Naturally in towns administration is more intensive than in rural areas, and problems arise and ideas are born in towns before they affect the rural areas, but in every way the experience of local government in towns is useful to the rural areas even if it is not directly relevant. The case therefore for keeping urban and rural local government together in one department is strong and it is reinforced by the social and economic ties which exist between all but a few special towns and the rural areas which surround them. Most towns indeed owe their very existence to the countryside in the midst of which they are situated.

Besides a central department or ministry wholly devoted to the establishment, nurture and control of local government other central agencies may be needed. Mention has already been made of a local service commission. Training institutions are necessary to raise the qualifications of staff and to ensure a steady supply of trained men and women. An association of local government officers is a valuable means of raising the performance standards of the local service as well as of watching over its general welfare. An association of local authorities can be an excellent kind of organization for canalizing communications between central and local government on matters of general policy. Nevertheless such an association is perhaps best not formed in the early stages but only after local government has attained a certain maturity. But here again care should be taken not to allow the growth of separate and possibly competitive associations for different grades or classes of local government until it has been proved that the various interests cannot be represented through a single association.

External aid

If the assumptions which have been made in this article are valid, African governments will require international aid of various sorts. Of financial aid it can be said that it should not be made direct to local authorities, but to the central Government with such earmarking for local government as may be agreed between the donor and recipient countries. Direct money grants to local authorities would cut across the subordinate status of local government which it is essential to emphasize at present, however large and important a particular local authority may be. To some this proposition may be self-evident, but it is not always possible to state it in such clear terms. There have been cases where external grants of money have been sought in the name of community development to build say a school or a hospital. A direct external link may prove an embarassment when what started as a community development project is on completion taken over for maintenance, as it normally is, by a statutory local authority. The object of financial aid should therefore be not to help local government directly but to help the central Government to improve the quality of its local government administration. No such objection attaches to technical assistance. One of the most fruitful forms of aid would be for local authorities in developed countries with the agreement of the African Governments first obtained, to put the knowledge and skill of their technical officers directly at the disposal of local authorities in Africa.

A very common suggestion at this point is that a good form of aid, free of political bias, is the provision of research workers and of technical, that is practical advisers. It is, however, open to question how much pure long-term research is needed at the moment. A more practical need is to record as many pertinent facts and figures as possible, to elicit the valuable information which is stored in the heads of all well-informed persons, to collate it and to put on paper all that is relevant to the solution of given problems. The more accurate the information which is available to those who make the decisions, the less likely are those decisions to be based on guesswork. Whether such work can be called research or not, this is the sort of investigation that is especially suitable to be manned and paid for by some source of external aid.

With regard to advisers, a prior need is the existence of an established, orderly and peacable system of administration, which has acquired a momentum of its own sufficient to offset extreme political pressure. Only such a form of administration is capable of absorbing expert advice and of putting it to good use. Where the system of administration is unstable and unorganized, advice drains unprofitably away. In the latter cases, OPEX[4] type aid may be useful, especially in a central agency responsible in general for assistance to local authorities.

Subject to these qualifications external aid can usefully be considered under the various headings to this article. For example the consolidation of small units, with the consequent changes of administrative boundaries, is a naturally explosive subject and impartial investigators from outside may have an advantage over investigators from inside the country who, even if totally impartial, will scarcely be believed to be. For setting out the alternatives for consideration which, in the local conditions, is the best relationship of local authorities with one another and with central agencies, the experience of other countries is clearly valuable and can well be provided through external aid. Similarly

[4] A United Nations scheme for the temporary employment of qualified foreign officers in operational and executive posts.

knowledge of the staffing system of local authorities and particularly the operation of the local service commission in a variety of countries can well be brought in from outside. Building and equipping training schools and institutions is another and most valuable way in which external aid can be applied. But a word of caution is necessary. It is not so easy to staff such training institutions from outside since it is essential for the training to be based on and to develop from the form of administration that has been in use in the past. This objection would not hold if local government administration were an exact science.

Money aid can be best applied to local government expenditure by funnelling it into the central loans institutions which it will in any case be necessary to set up. Ancillary to this is help in drafting statutes for the proper administration of such loans institutions. Also, help may be given in organizing credit institutions, and by offering fellowships for officers to visit institutions elsewhere.

External aid has probably little direct part to play in the sphere of the recurrent expenditure and revenue of local authorities but indirectly it may be of the greatest value in sponsoring surveys of present and potential sources of funds, allocation of tax authority and proceeds between levels of government, methods of tax collection, and use of grants in aid. In regard to financial administration, especially the checks and controls necessary to prevent misuse of local funds, the exchange of information between countries may be helpful. A sensible balance should be sought between a system that is so loose as to be worthless and one that is so meticulous as to stifle local initiative.

A great contribution can also be made by providing knowledge of the way in which a ministry or department of local government conducts its relations both with other ministries or departments and with local authorities.

Lastly there is the local government statute itself. There has been sufficient experience of local government now in Africa to make it possible, if men and money were available, to provide a model statute which, if not applicable to all countries, might be applicable to several countries within a region.

The tools of international aid are money, men and equipment in various permutations and combinations. Like most tools these can be mis-handled. Money is no use unless there is someone qualified to spend it to advantage. Equipment soon becomes useless if there is no-one to maintain it. Advisers are wasted if there is no-one to understand their advice. The problem of international aid cannot therefore be described in simple terms of providing an answer to a known question or of finding a working relationship between a whole and its parts. With the forces of unity and disunity constantly at work and counteracting each other at every level in Africa, neither the boundaries of a state nor the boundaries of its component parts are yet stable enough for anyone to be certain what system of local government administration will be best for it in the long run. These cautions indicate that aid to be worthwhile should be applied with discrimination and with a proper regard for priorities. The belief that all aid has some value, the broadside approach, if true, is wasteful. And it may not be true.

What then is required? The principal requirement is that there should be a rationally founded diagnosis of what is needed and what is best, agreed by the giving and receiving countries. Regional conferences and seminars are valuable because they help to spread information and create mutual understanding. Directing staff in both giving and receiving countries are necessary to work out realistic proposals for aid and to ensure that it is properly administered.

With the outline thus firm, every variety of aid can be useful, such as study tours and fellowships for persons hand-picked from the receiving countries and the provision of expert advice and the supply of experts to fill cadre (as distinct from advisory) posts by donor countries. Whatever form the aid may take, it ought ideally to be possible to say of it that, like mercy:

". . . It is twice blessed.
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

The cynicism which surrounds so much of aid at present must halve its value.

The Present and Future Role of the Collector in India

by HENRY MADDICK[1]

IN MANY COUNTRIES where district administration existed it is being adapted to new conditions following independence. That some area administration in the field is required would be admitted but the form it now takes differs widely. Sudan has dispensed with the district officer in those places, particularly the north, where the local government authorities are well established. Ghana, on the other hand, has separated the district officer from administration, and has made him a political agent for the government who reports to the regional commissioner, himself a junior member of the Cabinet in Accra. For India the problem is a difficult one to solve for the administration had been trained in the old British system for many decades prior to independence and the politicians grew into it. For them a change in the position of the collector[2] is a radical break with tradition; not just a British tradition, but one which has become theirs too.

The existence of the collector gives great comfort to his superiors whether they be political or official. For so long this versatile officer has acted for the government in every district of the nation that to many it is inconceivable that government might continue without him. During the earlier periods of the British administration, even of the East India Company's control once that was established over a whole province, the collector was the officer responsible not only for the *collection* of revenue but also, inevitably, for the preservation of order, the administration of justice, the careful and impartial maintenance of land records upon which, in many states, government revenue depended and for taking such action as local calamities demanded – bandits, riots, floods, famines, disease or any other circumstances which threatened the existence of the local community. In addition to exercising these functions he was, in that oft-repeated phrase 'the eyes and ears' of the government, responsible for conveying to it the reactions of the people to government policies and to other more local pressures. He thus presented to a centralized and remote top administration a continually changing picture of this vast country, the underlying problems, how the people at large were thinking, and from this what future economic and political developments might be.

The growth of the collectors' responsibilities

As the government reluctantly abandoned, however gradually, the early Victorian concept of an umpire holding the ring, in which all classes, creeds, castes, tribes and nationalities might pursue their own affairs as they pleased, always providing they did not impinge too drastically upon other groups, and as it came to accept that it was responsible for promoting the well-being of the

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[2] The collector or deputy commissioner is the senior administrative officer at district level, and derives his title from the days when he was primarily responsible for revenue collection besides keeping law and order.

peoples of British India, so did its activities expand. This change led to the establishment on a slender scale of additional officers in the district; some concerned with public works, particularly the building of roads, railways and bridges, and the development of irrigation; others, the medical officers, whose first task was to prevent infectious disease, and to care for the state employees who were posted in these remote field areas; and finally officers charged with improving agricultural practices which would lead to a decrease in famines and an increase in prosperity and in revenues.

With all these the collector was involved as the senior government officer in the field. He was responsible for the efficient discharge and co-ordination of their activities and for bringing them into some kind of relationship with the district boards which were brought into being after 1882. He was, in fact, the embodiment of the government, being the goad and the conscience, adviser and supervisor, of the field officers, the person of paramount importance to the inhabitants of the area, and the leader of such society as might exist in his principality. This domain might cover, as it did in old Madras, as much as 5,200 square miles of country with a population of anything up to 2½ million people. This was no small responsibility for one individual; no wonder that his position and status were such as to create between him and the residents, and even between him and the officers in the area, a considerable gulf.

His responsibilities widened as war efforts, and law and order requirements, added additional duties. After independence he became, even more than before, the recipient of miscellaneous responsibilities. As an individual he came to resemble that institutional rag-bag of government functions in Britain, the Home Office. All kinds of responsibilities have come his way. He has to carry out his traditional functions of maintaining order, collecting land revenue and registering land holdings. He has to implement the newer laws regarding the consolidation of holdings and the resettlement of land consequent upon legislation which set a ceiling to the amount of land held by any one individual. He is also the returning officer for all elections and has to make all arrangements for their being carried out satisfactorily.[3]

Far greater than the cumulative burden of these miscellaneous activities has been that of the development programme. From the first the collector was charged with the task of ensuring that it went through smoothly and efficiently. Soon after the programme was started in 1952, district development committees were created which brought together all the technical officers from the different blocks[4] and various non-officials whose advice or association with the committee was considered important. The collector was either the chairman or otherwise played a vital role. He had by then a far greater range of departments represented by field officers in the district than formerly. Agriculture had been strengthened by an officer responsible for animal husbandry. To the Public Works Department had been added officers for irrigation and for rural water supplies. Field officers for co-operation, small-scale industries, panchayats,[5] social welfare and education, all added to the strength of the team but also increased the problems of co-ordination. This was particularly so when the

[3] This is no small task. For example, in the general elections of 1962 in one district of Rajasthan, the collector was responsible for establishing some 800 polling stations, for training the officers to man them, and for organizing a fleet of 480 vehicles, official and private, in order to convey the officers and their polling papers to the polling stations and to bring them back afterwards.

[4] This was a sub-district area created to promote and administer the community development programme, with an average population of between 65,000 and 80,000.

[5] The elected village council.

district was split, as most were, into blocks where the community development programme was operating and those where it had not yet begun. Everything fell on the collector's desk whether it was a small savings programme, an increase in agricultural production, the digging of compost pits, the encouragement of adult literacy, the extension of education in general, or the promotion of co-operatives. There was nothing over which the government did not make the collector the theoretical overlord. "As far as the government is concerned the collector is therefore responsible for practically everything that happens or should happen in a district. He is functioning not only as the 'eyes and ears' of the government but also as the 'jack of all trades'."[6]

The possible roles of the collector in panchayati raj

With the advent of panchayati raj[7] his position and role were in doubt, and whilst various states have decided in different ways what his relationship to the system should be, the future is still much discussed. There were those who felt that he should be the chairman of the zila parishad, thus preserving and transferring to this new body his wide experience, his prestige and his authority. There were some who argued for this in terms which were strangely reminiscent of the comments of the British authorities on the recommendations of Lord Ripon for local government reforms in 1882. Lord Ripon proposed that, whenever possible, the chairmen of all local boards should be non-officials.

> "The point of the resolution to which I attach most importance is that which relates to the (district officer and the chair . . .) if the boards are to be of any use for the purpose of training the natives to manage their own affairs, they must not be over-shadowed by the persons of the Bara Saheb."[8]

The reaction as recorded in the report of the Committee of Local Self Government in Madras was:

> "The heads of all the major provinces expressed themselves strongly in favour of the district officer as president. Firstly, a local body acquired 'prestige and importance in the eyes of the people' when the D.O. was a member; secondly, local bodies gained greatly in influence when supported by the D.O. and his staff throughout the district; thirdly, 'the D.O. is the mainspring of the administration, and it is absolutely essential that his position shall be upheld in its integrity',"[9]

and so the reasoning went on. In the states of Madras and Mysore, as in the majority of the provinces of British India nearly 80 years previously, the zila parishads are still chaired by the collector. On the other hand the Central Council of Local Self Government at its sixth meeting recommended that:

> "The collector should be kept outside the three-tier system and should be the agent of the government in the field with a duty to keep the government informed of the happenings and the general trend of events and where the government so decides, to take necessary corrective action. For these purposes, he may be entitled to attend the meetings of the zila parishad/panchayati samiti or its sub-district level body."[10]

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[6] Report of the Committee on Democratic Decentralization, para. 8.11, Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, 1961.

[7] The title by which the local government system – at district (zila parishad), block (panchayati samiti) and village (panchayat) level – is known. See the author's article "Panchayati Raj", *J.L.A.O.*, October 1962.

[8] Tinker, E. – Local Self Government in India, Pakistan and Burma, p. 46.

[9] Tinker – *op. cit.*

[10] Sixth meeting of the Central Council of Local Self Government proceedings, page 75, recommendation 6.2, Govt. of India, February 1961.

Variations between states of the collectors' duties and status

There has been no uniformity in the ways in which the states have dealt with the situation. Each has adopted, as it is entitled, its own solution. The first variation is in the status of the collector.

In Andhra Pradesh the collector is a voting member of the zila parishad and chairman of the functional standing committees of that body. In Rajasthan the collector as district development officer is an *ex-officio* non-voting member of the zila parishad. In Gujarat, Orissa and the Punjab, he is to be found as an associated member, also non-voting. Of the other five states in which panchayati raj is established, four have kept the collector outside the system and used him as a supervisor of the panchayati raj units. Maharashtra, on the other hand, has not only kept him outside the system but has also restricted his supervisory powers to their exercise only in the case of a threat to peace as a result of an action or a resolution by the zila parishad or, in some extraordinary circumstances, where the state has decided to investigate an activity of a zila parishad.[11]

Thus the present arrangements adopted vary between those where the collector has been brought into the system, and those where he has been kept outside but in a supervisory position, or alternatively brought in only for emergencies.

The rationale attaching to these decisions is not easy to follow for basically the states are implementing the same general principles against the same administrative background. True, some of the states such as Madras and Bombay have a longer and more favourable experience of local self-government than others. But whereas Maharashtra (one of the two successor states to Bombay) has excluded the collector completely, Madras has brought him right into the system as chairman of the district development council. One has to look further than this but even then a comprehensive explanation is difficult to find. Part of it lies in the recommendation of the Central Council of Local Self Government quoted above which distinguishes between those states where the zila parishad has functions of its own to perform and those where it has not. In the latter situation, the panchayati samitis will be the major functional units and the zila parishad a co-ordinating and supervisory body with, in a number of states, limited executive functions. These include, for example in Andhra Pradesh, the establishment and maintenance of secondary and vocational schools. In these states development functions over the whole district area or affecting more than one panchayati samiti will be carried out by departments operating through their district organization. In addition to these district-wide functions of departmental officers, there will be many occasions when the extension officers or the functional committees of the panchayati samiti require not only the advice and guidance of the district technical officer, but also assistance in the form of materials or equipment. Clearly, it is necessary in these cases for the administrative levels to be buckled together. The collector performs this role through his participation in both the zila parishad and the district technical officers' co-ordinating committee and through his general influence over officers in the field.

This situation has been dealt with in considerable detail by both Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. In the former a government order states that:

> "Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have leant heavily on the collector as a participant and supervisor in the panchayati raj system, in the former state as a member of the zila parishad, and in the latter in addition as chairman

[11] Government of Maharashtra L.A. Bill XXXV of 1961, para. 266-268, Bombay, 1961.

of the standing functional committees. His duties in this respect have been spelt out by the government – 'The district collector, as chairman of the standing committees of the zila parishad, is the authority responsible for guiding the zila parishad and its committees to reach sound and useful conclusions'. The district collector is assigned the role of a district development officer under the Act. It is he who should guide the district technical officers in their task, co-ordinate their work and help them to implement their plans. At the same time he should actively influence the zila parishad and the panchayati samitis to think in terms of more development and spur them on to increased effort, especially to mobilize the community to greater self-effort. He should also guide them in thinking about new lines of advancement or development and help them in formulating and executing suitable schemes. Much depends on the district collector and the lead he gives both to the people's representatives and the officers in the district."[12]

Rajasthan has been even more precise. The duties of the collector have been listed as follows:

(*a*) To examine the extent of progress achieved in execution of various schemes and to make suggestions for improvements.

(*b*) To examine that the amounts placed at the disposal of panchayati samitis are being properly utilized for the purpose for which they were earmarked.

(*c*) To ensure that minimum standards of service are maintained in institutions run by panchayati samitis.

(*d*) To ensure that the block development officer has effective control over his staff and that his team are fully playing their role as extension staff.

(*e*) To co-ordinate the working of various development departments of the state government at the district level.

(*f*) To ensure that technical assistance is being made available.

(*g*) To see that panchayati samitis evolve an effective administrative link with panchayats in programme planning and execution.

(*h*) To train panchayati raj institutions in the realization that ultimate authority vests in the people.[13]

At the other extreme is the State of Maharashtra where almost every district function has been delegated to the zila parishad either directly or on an agency basis. Here the district technical officers are no longer independent of the zila parishad but are deputed to it and responsible to it, whilst at the same time being technically accountable to their own departmental headquarters. In this situation there is no question of co-ordinating two different spheres of activity. Their job is to execute the zila parishads' decisions in ways which match the general policies of their department. The collector has no co-ordinating role to play, nor is he required to bring his extensive experience and wisdom to the zila parishad, since it will have an officer of equal or senior rank to the collector as its chief executive officer. The situation is clear. The collector may be required to act in an emergency where he anticipates public disorder arising from a resolution or action of the zila parishad, but not otherwise unless specifically ordered by government.

In the other four states – Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh,

[12] Andhra Pradesh G.O. Rt. No. 389, 3rd May 1960; Panchayati Raj, Role of Officers – Instructions: p. 5.

[13] Government of Rajasthan Panchayati Samitis and Zila Parishads Act 1959; *Government Central Press*, Jaipur, 1959; (and other sources unpublished).

the collector's role is more difficult to classify, although Uttar Pradesh has been quite precise. A government order stresses that whilst he will not have any powers of day-to-day administration, he can considerably influence the thinking and actions of these new bodies in the early stages when they are trying to establish themselves in developmental administration. Broadly, the district magistrate (collector)

> "will inspect, make suggestions, give guidance resolving difficulties, stimulate discussion, watch the progress of the plan schemes and utilization of funds . . . and generally make himself useful to the zila parishad and the kshettra samitis (panchayati samitis)".

The order goes on to spell out the ways in which this influence can be achieved.[14] He has to ensure on the one hand that all the government servants remain aware of the government servants' conduct rules and observe them in their daily working, and on the other hand that they extend full co-operation and loyalty to these democratic panchayati raj bodies. The collector should watch over the zila parishad through regular reports and, if necessary, by calling a meeting of the chairman of the council, its executive officer and its financial officer, or of a functional committee; by inspecting the works of the parishad; by requesting the authority to discuss a particular matter; and finally by sending a quarterly report on its operation to the government. The supervisory role in Uttar Pradesh is far in excess of that contemplated in Maharashtra in the sense that this is a regular feature and not an emergency one.

The special committee appointed to report on the appropriate panchayati raj system for the State of Bihar considered that the collector should be responsible for a very wide range of powers, the execution of schemes, the supervision of works, the inspection of panchayati samitis on behalf of the zila parishad, the securing of grants due to the zila parishad from government departments, the evaluation of schemes to assist blocks, and the building up of district plans. He should also attend meetings of the parishad and accompany the chairman of the standing committee on tours wherever required.[15] Here was not only a matter of inspection but in fact complete association with the zila parishad itself, very much in the tradition of the 'burra saheb'. In the upshot the Bill of 1961 gave a very different role to the collector. He should render "a reasonable assistance to the panchayati samitis and the zila parishads in the exercise of their powers and performance of duties". He has been made responsible for supervising and inspecting the block development officer and the block. Moreover, he has to ensure co-ordination between different departments of government in the district, and has disciplinary control over all government servants working in the panchayati samiti or the zila parishad.[16]

In Gujarat, a state where the collector is to be an associated member of the zila parishad, the position is less clear. The zila parishad and the taluka panchayat (panchayati samiti) have both been entrusted with a wide range of functions and not much remains to the district officers to carry out as purely departmental functions. Logically, the collector in Gujarat should remain outside the system for he has little direct responsibility in practice. Yet in Uttar Pradesh where his duties and powers are extensive, he has been excluded from it.

This confusion of thought has not been confined to the states. Even the third

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[14] Government of Uttar Pradesh Order No. 1890/XXXV–C, para. 1, Lucknow, 1-4.62.

[15] Report of the committee constituted to consider the future set-up of the district board in Bihar, pps. 40-50; *Government of Bihar*, Patna, March 1961.

[16] Bihar Panchayati Samiti and Zila Parishad Bill 1961, Section 64; Patna, November 1961.

five year plan is vague and far too generalized about the position of the collector. It certainly gave inadequate recognition to the variety of solutions being practised in the states.

> "The collector of the district will continue to have a large share of responsibility in facilitating the success of panchayati raj institutions. He has the duty of ensuring co-ordination at the district level between the zila parishad and the technical officers in different fields, close contacts between the latter and the panchayati samitis and extension officers at the block level, and a continuing flow of technical advice and guidance from departments at the state level. An important aspect of the collector's work will be to assist democratic institutions and the public services in developing the right conventions in day-to-day work and in administrative relationship based on recognition of their distinctive contribution in fulfilling common objectives."[17]

Clearly, it is misleading to talk of the collector's co-ordinating role in Maharashtra or even in Gujarat.

The present position of the collector across the fifteen states cannot be summarized both adequately and briefly. His responsibilities vary widely. In the states where panchayati raj has not been fully implemented, Jammu and Kashmir or West Bengal, for instance, his functions in respect of district and development activities are in accord with those outlined earlier. In states where he is required to play an active part in the working of the local government system, he is also discharging duties regarding residual district activities of the departments and new land legislation involving him directly, besides his traditional functions. In two states, Maharashtra and Gujarat, these last two categories make up the bulk of his work, for neither local government nor development is directly his concern.

The future position of the collector turns upon the answers to two questions. What sort of supervision is required for panchayati raj and who will provide it? What functions will be left to the collector in the course of the next five to ten years as the process of decentralization is extended?

The evolution of sound relations between officials and councillors

It is generally admitted that some supervision is necessary if panchayati raj is to develop in a way which will establish healthy traditions and honest efficient operations. Vested and conservative interests combine to assert the sanctity of customary practices and the problem of changing traditions is often greater than the problem of securing a healthy development in the initial years. The supervision required for the units of panchayati raj is a form of education, encouragement and guidance which will bring their members, whether they are officials or non-officials, to appreciate their full responsibility to the community at large and the potential contribution that each unit can make to the development of its area and thus of rural India as a whole.

Every decision which the council, its chairman or its committees take, has to be viewed in the light of these responsibilities and their discharge by the whole community. Hence, if for no other reason, minorities must be cared for, honesty must be above question, and care for the whole area and not that which is politically vulnerable for the party in power, must be assured. Stemming from this are the methods of day-to-day operation; prior classification of policy by the elected representatives and a faithful discharge of this by the officials; full

[17] Third Five Year Plan, page 340, Government of India, Delhi, 1961.

discussions, in which the officers are not only entitled by law but encouraged and expected to address the council or its committees on every occasion in which their technical training and experience can add to the understanding of the councillors and thus to the wisdom of their final decision. Whilst this is to be demanded of the non-officials, so also should the officials try to appreciate the sort of wisdom and understanding which their conciliar masters possess. This will often be pressed in an indirect or uneducated fashion, often in a way which may seem irrelevant to the topic being discussed. But despite this there is much of immense value to be gained from the commonsense, local knowledge and innate social understanding of the representatives drawn from different villages, classes, castes and creeds. Their views have to be reconciled with government programmes and with the technical requirements of each situation. Partnership of both sides is the only way to secure the full potential contribution of the local unit to social and economic development, and thus to make development and democracy a reality to the people.

These theoretical considerations have important implications for the day-to-day operation of the panchayati raj units. At every meeting, in every formal or informal discussion, in administrative decisions and in daily working relationships established between officials and non-officials, correct attitudes can be either strengthened or rejected as a result of which the panchayati raj unit will either grow in stature or shrivel. Difficulties between officers and councillors are bound to arise over the effective implementation of state or union government policies which are unpalatable to the local body. This may be due to the expense falling on it or to the imposition of unacceptable priorities. In such cases, there will almost certainly be strained relations between the councillors and their technical staff, and this will frequently also involve the chief executive officer. Another source of friction is liable to arise in some councils when a councillor or a group of councillors is seeking either political or personal gain from decisions which they are taking on behalf of, or trying to force upon, the whole council. Here too, ideally, the chief executive officer, and if it is a technical decision, the appropriate chief technical adviser, should be prepared to point out the inequity of these decisions and the long term effect which they will have upon the reputation and standing of the council's representatives in the eyes of the public. Yet in each case the position of the officers is going to be difficult. The councillors, and particularly the chairman, can act in such a way over a great number of small issues as to intimidate the officer concerned.

Moreover, history had cast the partners in opposite roles. The officials have always controlled the situation (often with tact, leadership and a sense of social responsibility), while the non-officials have been subordinate to them. The roles are now reversed and past attitudes and relationships make an uneasy foundation upon which to build a partnership.

The need for a supervisor of panchayati raj units

In this situation it is of importance to have a superior authority which may intervene, even though it would be unwise to establish the practice of servants appealing continually over the heads of their masters against council decisions. If this occurred frequently, local bodies would be tied to the apron-strings of the state government, and this is not the object of instituting panchayati raj or any other system of local government. To avoid this constantly recurring, education, encouragement and guidance are needed, and supervision should be informal and continuous. The supervising officer should frequently visit the local

government units in his particular geographical area of responsibility and have informal discussions with the chairman and the chief executive officer and other technical officers on every such visit. He might also sit in as an observer at the deliberations of the council or its committees. His position should be seen as that of the family doctor who is a welcome visitor, rather than that of the probation officer or the police inspector. If the supervising officer can establish a right relationship, he will be able to influence the council greatly in its discussions by, for example, explaining why government has embarked upon a certain policy, and what the local authority can do to help fulfil it. He could mediate when tensions arise between the non-officials and officials, and even prevent this happening. But none of this can be achieved if his visits are infrequent and are looked on as being those of fault-finder rather than friendly adviser.

If this image of the supervisor is accepted, then it must be asked whether the revenue officers – the commissioner, the collector and the sub-district officer, can fulfil this role and, moreover, whether they have the time to do so. Their approach to this new function must be tactful. Any suggestion of official superiority or of the assertion of the authority traditionally vested in a revenue officer as the most senior officer in the district or sub-district would be inimical to the healthy growth of these institutions of direct democracy. Almost as important, it would be effective only as long as the units themselves were prepared to accept the straight-jacket of authoritarian control. This period is likely to depend upon the inexperience of the councillors themselves and upon their ignorance of the situation in a state like Maharashtra where very extended control has been vested in the local council itself. Many collectors will vehemently deny that they are unsuited to this and often as individuals they are sincere and correct. Yet there are others to whom the psychological transition from district monarch to that of an adviser is impossible. Moreover, in at least one southern state personal observation suggests that the board of revenue itself lacks interest in panchayati raj and is unable to think in terms other than the issue of orders and directives. Certainly careful training and re-orientation of revenue officials would be required before they could carry out this work.

The other factor is the time to be taken over these supervisory activities which, in turn, will depend upon the size of the area for which an officer is made responsible. If one assumes that the collector is to supervise panchayati samitis as well as the zila parishad, then in some states he may have as many as twenty or more units to look after. Even in Bihar where the number of panchayati samitis in each district has been reduced to an average of eight, there are too many for the frequent visits that are envisaged. These visits should not be the quick rush in, the signing of the inspection book, a note in the diary and the relieved return to headquarters. They require, particularly in the early years, periods of two or even three days to be spent in each unit to establish personal understanding and confidence. If, in addition, the supervising officer is to keep in touch with the state government and with his superior and have time to read the general reports inevitably arising from a field administration system in which information is flowing in both directions, then it is unlikely that he can cope adequately with more than five units.[18]

If giving advice and supervision are more than the average collector can combine with his duties, even more so is his appointment to be the executive

[18] The large number of authorities in each supervisory area would be one major criticism of the excellent arrangement in the Punjab where a directorate of supervision and guidance has been established.

officer of the zila parishad as is suggested in some states. This was discussed in, and one might say despatched by, the Maharashtra report.[19] On the other hand the Maharashtra system has produced as the staff head of the zila parishad administration, a man from the 'senior time scale' of the Indian Administrative Service, who is of equal rank and may be even senior to the collector himself. It would, therefore, be impossible for the collector to act as adviser of *superior* status and understanding in this connection.

The future role of the collector

Moreover, the Maharashtra pattern has also posed in an extreme fashion the second question, namely, what functions will be left to the collector in that state as a result of the redistribution of responsibilities to panchayati raj. The traditional revenue functions are ceasing to be as important as formerly, and some states are not only allowing land revenue to be divided between the three local government tiers, but they are also making the panchayats responsible for its collection. It is true that for some years to come the legislation regarding the consolidation of holdings and the enforcement of the ceiling upon the size of individual landholdings will take up much time and energy.[20] There is also the modern function of organizing elections.

The traditional functions of maintaining law and order, of co-ordinating the work of departments in the district and of acting as the eyes and ears of the government, still remain. Law and order in many countries has ceased to be the function of the district administrative officer and has passed to the magistracy, as in Britain (where only a justice of the peace can 'read the riot act'), or to the district superintendent of police, as in the Sudan. Yet there is still scepticism in some quarters of India as to whether traditional impartiality would be maintained by any person other than the collector. As for co-ordinating activities, this can hardly be vested in any other body or person than that of the zila parishad which is responsible for all developmental functions and all or nearly all departmental functions other than those which affect an area greater than a single district. Here it is not the collector but often the commissioner who will have to intervene to see that large-scale activities are co-ordinated with other activities in his division. The same would apply to unimportant residual district activities not made over to panchayati raj. Certainly all infra-district activities should fall within the purview of the zila parishad and should be co-ordinated either through the council's deliberation of policy, planning and budgeting or by the chief executive officer. The third function, that of being the eyes and ears of the government, is nothing more than a nostalgic hangover from the days when there was no source of information other than the collectorate. Today, the question must be posed as to whether government requires to continue a special information man when it has made over to panchayati raj the responsibility for all district activities. Does it need a separate agent to supply it with information of the shortcomings of agencies operating in the field or of democratically elected bodies? The former function is the responsibility of the individual technical departments and the latter the responsibility of the supervisor of panchayati raj.

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[19] *Op. cit.* paragraph 8. 12.

[20] In many states individual agricultural holdings consist of a number of small and often totally uneconomic strips of land scattered around the village area and the recent legislation has provided for the compulsory consolidation of these in a manner which is equitable to all landowners.

How then is the collector to occupy his time and justify his position? The justification for his position comes not from his understandable but subjective opinion that government cannot go on without him and that the district would fall to pieces if he were withdrawn, or from those in the state administration and often politicians in the state capital who feel that life would be far too uncomfortable without this general factotum to keep watch over everything on behalf of the government. Feelings are insubstantial justification for retaining so highly placed an officer. In Maharashtra another job has now been found for him, namely that of industries officer. His charge here has yet to be fully defined, but it is thought that he will be responsible for industrial development outside the sphere of small-scale industries which is already a special branch of the development programme. In this role he is not being trained; such is the faith in his inherent capacity and in the inherited tradition of his office, that it is assumed he can do anything !

In other states where the collector is part of panchayati raj, for example Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, his problem is the reverse, namely one of overwork. Yet how long is this position likely to continue? As the local leaders become politically more sure of themselves and are more able to operate the machinery of policy-making and administration, so will the collector's position become less and less tenable as a member of the organization. He will then be forced either to abdicate or, on occasions, to assert a policy as the officer of the government in the advocacy of which he, as a member of the zila parishad, has been already outvoted by a majority of the democratically elected members. When this whole arrangement will be rejected is difficult to forecast. It is probable that within two further terms of office, say six to eight years, the pressure for the removal of the collector from the system will be very strong indeed. His position then will be analogous to that of his colleagues in Maharashtra.

In such a situation, it is appropriate to ask how collectors, a class of officers who have come into the service by the most highly competitive examination in India and who in the past have been trained throughout their early career by exposure to situations and responsibilities which enable the best of them to become secretaries to government, are now going to gain the necessary and relevant experience? They are likely to be under-employed and retained for a series of functions which gives them a less than adequate picture of the country, its peoples, the problems of their leadership and of the conflict of political interests. It is doubtful whether India can afford either for the present to employ or for the future to train the cream of its administration in this way.

In the states that have chosen to use the collectors as the supervisor and co-adjutor of the panchayati raj system – and this might be the decision of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh and other similarly placed states when the collector has ceased to be *persona grata* with the zila parishad – the problem arises whether the attitude, approach and training of the revenue official are the most desirable for this role. Certainly, despite all their experience as the former district development officers and chairmen of the district development councils, the attitude of many at the inception of panchayati raj was not encouraging. At a conference of collectors held in one state immediately prior to the inauguration of the system, the view was widely expressed that they, the collectors, would now have no further responsibilities for development and could return to their proper traditional work, such as the collection of land revenue. In another state the unsatisfactory reaction of some of the collectors is illustrated by a letter sent out to them by the chief secretary:

"In a few districts, collectors have not visited certain panchayati samitis even once. The problems have arisen and grown and reached the government without the collectors knowing about their existence. Some of them have not even cared to keep themselves in the know of the fundamentals of the programme. The monthly progress reports required by the development commissioner is not reaching him regularly from almost every district. You will agree with me that these trends cannot be allowed to persist if the administration is to run on healthy lines in conjunction with the new institutions of the people."

The training of collectors as panchayati raj supervisors

Whilst this is the present attitude of some, it does not mean that future attitudes cannot be changed. But if they are to be changed, then special training will be needed for the supervisors not only in the objectives, working and making of policy, but also in the personal relationships of panchayati raj. Training will also be necessary in such subjects as the dynamics of an administrative organization and problems of communication within the formal structure, the relationship of the administrator to the politician and the means of communication between them. All these are far too complex and far too important to be left to the process of 'picking up on the job'. It requires orientation in the initial training programme and then throughout the early career of the collector. This career should be through the tiers of panchayati raj, starting as a panchayat supervisor and moving from there through the block and the zila parishad as an executive officer, with possibly an intervening period as supervisor of panchayati samitis. He could then proceed to a post on the divisional staff, one task being the supervision of zila parishads in the area. From this point, and possibly even during this process of career training, he should be given experience within departments in the state capital. He will thus have the widest possible on-the-job training to fit him for positions of responsibility. In a very small way this training has already been pioneered in Rajasthan, where all Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service officers, as well as those in the Rajasthan Administrative Service, have to complete successfully a period as block development officers before being considered for further promotion.

At the same time panchayati raj will be tuned up by the injection of this class of officer into the organization as executives. The experience gained as an executive officer will be of great value in the task of education, guidance and supervision. This is the only practicable solution to the problem of who can supervise the panchayati raj units, calling as it does for a high degree of leadership, resolution and honesty, as well as education and status.

Conclusion

The post of collector is indeed approaching a turning point comparable perhaps to that of 1875 when those in the Indian Civil Service had to choose between administrative and judicial functions. Another such change is close upon their successors. The real future of the Indian Administrative Service lies with *and in* the new local government system, as its executive officers and as its supervisors. Such general district work as there is will dwindle rapidly over the next ten years and an officer of collector's rank on the staff of the divisional commissioner will be adequate to supervise the residue over a number of districts. The future of the district lies with the zila parishad and the occasional

technical service too big or too rare to be incorporated in it – the large-scale industry or the giant hydro-electric project.

The term collector may go, for one so inappropriate to the task of executive officer or supervisor of the panchayati raj system could hardly be devised. This, however, does not and could not mean the elimination of the Indian Administrative Service from the rural field. Members of this Service need the experience, not of revenue-collecting but of local government, local administration and a local political society. The programme of development and of democratic decentralization needs the support of their intelligence, education, training, drive and enthusiasm.

A Chief Visits Town

by Archie Mafeje[1]

The purpose of this article is to illustrate the attitude of townspeople in Cape Town to chiefs. In this case, 'townspeople' is used to include both the permanent urban African population and those who are in town temporarily for jobs, that is the migrant workers. Migrant workers regard themselves as country people, and most of them have their families in the country. Their reaction in any given political situation is of particular interest, as it gives the sociologist an opportunity of seeing how the people's aspirations fit in the Government's policy of increasing the power of Bantu authorities in the country, and appointing chiefs' representatives in towns or establishing urban Bantu councils.

A constitution, giving this scheme a legal status, is already under way. This constitution, generally known as the Transkeian Constitution, is intended to establish the Transkei as an 'independent' state, with its own parliament. The leading figure in the constitutional talks is the Chairman of the Transkei Territorial Authority, Chief Matanzima who, at the same time, is the leader of the pro-Government faction. Opposing him, is Chief Sabata Dalindyebo, a descendant of the most senior branch of the Thembu royal house. Matanzima is also a Thembu chief, but less senior than Sabata. However, the Government recognizes him as a paramount chief in his own right, and independent of Sabata.

This article describes the arrival of a third Thembu chief, Mtikrakra,[2] in Cape Town. By traditional law, he is next to Sabata in seniority (see appendix for genealogy). It will also be shown that, besides the clash between the two senior Thembu chiefs in relation to the Government's policy, there is a third force at work, the modern African nationalist.

The Chiefs Reception Committee

In 1961, Mtikrakra, Sabata's classificatory brother, visited Cape Town. He was accompanied by a small band of councillors, *amaphakathi*, including the leader of the Thembu Bantu Church, and stayed in Langa (a segregated African township on the outskirts of Cape Town) with a minister from Thembuland. Arrangements for his accommodation were made hurriedly because nobody knew about his coming to town. Most Thembu considered this extraordinary. However, as soon as he had come, certain individuals went to report his arrival to one of the senior men from Thembuland. This man is also a secretary of the Chiefs' Reception Committee, formed some years ago to cater for the visits of chiefs to the Western Cape. It is, theoretically, representative of all the various tribal groups working there. Each chiefdom is supposed to have two members in the committee, but most are not represented because their men are not interested. Some migrants feel that chieftainship is an anachronism.

The committee has an executive of eight members, four from Thembuland, two from the Ciskei, one from Fingoland, and one from Bhaca country. Four

[1] Archie Mafeje is a post-graduate student in Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town, and wrote his article in August, 1962.

[2] Chief Mtikrakra is the son of Silimela, Sampu's son in the 'rafter' (iqadi) of the great house. Sabata is the eldest son of the great house.

of these members are resident in Cape Town, and rent houses in Langa Township. One of them has been in Cape Town since the 1890s. He has been a chairman or member of associations such as the Advisory Board, Langa Vigilance Association, and Fingo Celebrations. The other three are, or have been, members of the same organizations. From this account, it is obvious that these four men are urbanized, and cannot see the chiefs in the same light as the migrants from the Langa barracks. In general, the urban population is opposed to chieftainship and regards chiefs as *oomantshingilane* (police-spies). So the motives of these four men in joining the Chiefs' Reception Committee appear to be different from those of the other four men, who are migrants and are concerned with the chiefs as their country leaders.

Thus, a country-town cleavage was liable to develop in the committee. There was also a potential tribal cleavage. It was precipitated by a quarrel over the committee's finances and expressed itself in terms of Thembu against non-Thembu. The actions of the chairman and the treasurer, who belong to the urbanized group, and who, at the same time, happen to be non-Thembu, caused dissension among the members of the committee. The Thembu members justly maintained that a great percentage of the money the committee held came from the Thembu. The committee, to raise funds for its purposes, takes one rand from every R20 of the first R100 that each chief, whom they entertain, receives from his people, and 75 per cent. of approximately 80 chiefs who visited Cape Town between 1947 and 1961 were Thembu. After a prolonged dispute and a court case, the funds in question were produced, but this did not heal the split in the committee.

Preliminary discussions

When Mtikrakra came to Cape Town, it was the Thembu section of the committee, headed by the secretary, that made all the necessary arrangements for him. This, at first, was difficult. The secretary said that he did not like the idea of being the first person to be approached on the arrival of the chief. He felt that it was unsafe to be associated with the chief's arrival when an open conflict between the chiefs and the people existed. However, he agreed to announce the presence of the chief to the chief's close relatives, the senior men from the chief's village (*ilali*) and the Engcobo district in general. One of the chief's uncles, on hearing about his nephew's arrival, decided to disappear and would not have anything to do with the whole affair. When interviewed on the subject, the explanation he gave was that "only an idiot would put his head into a nest of hornets". He asked rhetorically, "Who does not know that chiefs are being murdered (*ziyagetyengwa*) in the country today?"

For three successive nights, the senior men from Thembuland had confidential discussions on what was to be done about the chief. It was not an easy decision to make, despite the fact that it was not the first time a Thembu chief visited town. Formerly, the people from the district concerned did not discuss a chief's visit; they simply informed the Chiefs' Reception Committee that their chief was in town, and that they would like the committee to make arrangements for his reception.

Two points of view were expressed in the discussions. "Would it be fair to ourselves and our kin in the country to welcome a chief here in town?" was one point of view. A counter-question was asked, "Would it be fair for us to refuse to receive Jongilizwe's child, in the face of his father's great service to the Thembu? What crime has this child (the chief) perpetrated against us, the

Thembu? Won't he complain bitterly that we failed to treat him like other Thembu chiefs for no apparent reason?" Note here the attempt by the speakers to justify themselves. The one side, granting the points raised by the other, was wondering if, by receiving Mtikrakra, they would not be creating a precedent for more chiefs to begin visiting town again. (It was early in 1959 that a chief last visited town.) "For how long will we be in a position to receive chiefs in towns? Don't you think that the present developments make such an action dangerous and indefensible?", it was asked. It was felt, notwithstanding other considerations, that if an ugly situation developed, and the Thembu refused to receive whatever chief came to town, it would not be anybody else who would suffer embarrassment and humiliation among 'foreign' peoples, but the Thembu themselves.

After a prolonged discussion, a compromise was reached. It was decided that the chief should be received, but it should be made clear to him that the Thembu were surprised to see him in town because he, as a chief, knew best what was happening to the people, both in the town and the country. It was felt that he should be further told that "the people are starving and dwell in rivers here in town and have nothing to offer him". This is tantamount to saying that the chief should not come to town again.

After the caucus had made its decision, it was announced to all Thembu and interested persons that Chief Mtikrakra was in town, and his reception was to be held in the Langa Community Hall on a given date. This stimulated more discussion amongst the rank and file from Thembuland. A field-worker was present when the matter was discussed in one of the rooms in the barracks. A man of the same clan as the chief formally introduced the discussion by saying: "Fellow men, you have heard that the honourable scion of our royal house, Chief Zwelihle Mtikrakra, tomorrow will present himself to his people in the Langa Hall." "And so what?" was the immediate question from one of the men.

"I want to know our stand in this room. Are we going to the meeting or not?"

"It appears to me that you are giving yourself an unnecessary task. In the first place, you tell us about a chief. Did you elect a chief? Or do you remember any time when we, this group, sent a delegate to go and represent us at the installation of this chief? Formerly, chiefs used to go round in the barracks and the zones meeting their subjects. Why can't this chief do the same? What is he afraid of that he cannot face us?"

"It is unnecessary to involve ourselves in a heated argument over this, because the position is clear even to me, but all I am saying is that there is nothing much to be done, except just 'chopping a piece of lung for the dogs'[3]".

Further discussion was thus forestalled, and the decision whether to attend the meeting or not was left to the individual.

The Chief's reception

The group proceeded to the meeting which was opened with a short prayer. The chairman, one of the members of the Chiefs' Reception Committee, anticipating some trouble, made the following remarks: "The purpose of this meeting is to receive Chief Mtikrakra; it is not a meeting for politics. How the

[3] *Ukunqungela inja umphunga* is a Xhosa proverb. Literally, it means "to cut a piece of lung for the dogs". Freely translated, it means "merely to fulfil an obligation". The lung is the least highly prized part of the carcase, and is usually thrown to the dogs.

chief came to town, and what he wants in town, is irrelevant to this meeting. People who are interested in that can discuss it elsewhere. I know there is a lot of talk about the position of the chief. Some people feel that the chief is a government stooge, and they ask, 'Is there still chieftainship?'. I would like to make it clear to such people that the chiefs are not instruments for fighting the Government, they only appeal to the Government for fair treatment of everybody in this country." This speech was not well-received. As a result, a number of people from the floor wanted to comment, but they were denied the opportunity to do so by the organizers of the meeting who, sensing trouble, had prepared a list of speakers beforehand.

Accordingly, two ministers and two members of the committee were given the opportunity to speak. By the time the fourth speaker had finished, there was a general commotion in the audience, and the atmosphere was becoming more and more tense. It exploded when a young man from Thembuland, despite protests from the chair, stood up and said, "I am X's son, a member of the Ndungwane clan from Engcobo, and therefore a true Thembu." He went on, "I am not going to address myself to those men at the table, for I see that they think that this is a church service. Get this straight, this is not a church service, this is a forum (*inkundla*)." He politely, but determinedly, addressed himself to the chief, and said, "Honoured scion of the royal house (*mntwan' omhle*) give us some light! What is your mission here? We, as your people, would like to know." As he spoke, the chairman was ordering him to sit down, but some members from the audience, with equal persistence, demanded that he be allowed to speak for they said, "he is a man like any other man." Immediately he had finished speaking, the *imbongi*[4] dramatically jumped forward on to the stage, and recited a praise poem, addressing himself to the chairman:

"Mlambo,[5] you know how to handle royal affairs.
Refrain from giving ministers all the chance to speak,
For they are going to preach, as they are wont to.
Be advised and give way before the Thembu burn one another."

He went on praising the chief and introducing him to the audience. After the *imbongi* had sat down, one of the Mgudlwa chiefs, a descendant of the Jumba house (see appendix for genealogy), said a few words of welcome to the chief: "We, the Thembu, feel greatly honoured that our chief has made it a point to visit us, despite the present times, times which seem to imperil everybody's life." The next speaker was a Joyi chief. He also welcomed Mtikrakra, adding that people in towns "are like chickens to a hawk". He elaborated saying, "I am also a chief because my father was one of the chiefs of the Thembu. Traditionally, chiefs are not bought or created, but are born. My father never betrayed his people, and therefore, I have no reason to betray them nor will I ever betray them. For that reason, I have chosen to be a worker amongst other workers, and I am satisfied in my dissatisfaction" – meaning that he can no longer function as a true chief, though he was born one, and therefore he is in town as an ordinary labourer.

This speech touched everybody, and most of all the *imbongi*, who stood up, and burst into a praise poem with great emotion:

[4] An *imbongi* is a praise poet who frequented the chief's great place and travelled with him in the traditional Nguni society. His distinctive feature is that he can recite poems without having prepared them beforehand.

[5] *Mlambo* is a clan name.

"I have been wondering what is happening to everybody else,
That up to now, nobody has made any reference to Joyi,
The dark bull that is visible by its shiny horns,
Horns that to-day are besmeared with streaks of blood.
It is for that reason that to-day he is not amongst us.
As I am talking to you now, he is far away in a
Lonely desert. But, to me, it seems that even that
Loneliness will not stop his bellowing."

The Joyi the *imbongi* was referring to is one of the Thembu chiefs who have been uncompromisingly opposed to such schemes as rehabilitation and stock limitation. He has been banished.

Other chiefs spoke but they were less impressive. Most of them were sub-chiefs and headmen from Thembuland. Each group of chiefs collected some money amongst themselves, and handed it in as a donation from all of them. A few individual migrants also made contributions. The total amount collected was R48. Of this, approximately R36 was donated by the various chiefs from Thembuland. The response from the people was rather poor. In all, there were about 250 people at the meeting. Only five of these came from the married quarters in Langa, two woman-teachers and three friends: the others were from the single quarters, the barracks and the zones. When asked what attracted them to the chief's reception, the former said that they came out of curiosity, and that they wanted to see what happens in such gatherings. Their only comment was that the one thing they liked was the *imbongi:* they were impressed by his oratory. The meeting, which by this time was becoming dull, came to an end. It was closed with a short prayer by the minister of the Thembu Bantu Church.

During the week following the reception, Chief Mtikrakra visited Somerset West and Nyanga West. In Nyanga East and Retreat, the people refused to receive him: they said they were not interested, and they had no time to waste on chiefs. Various chiefs have been welcome in these places before, but suddenly the people are no longer prepared to receive a chief. The families in Nyanga East are mostly people who were removed from places like Kliptown, Cookbush, and Retreat. They have been in town for some time and are, in fact, part of the urban African population, except that they are poorer than most families in Langa. The Pan-Africanist Congress have or had some influence on them. At Somerset West and Nyanga West, the chief received a donation of R86 and R50 respectively.

The farewell meeting

On the day prior to the chief's departure, a farewell meeting was organized for him. It was held in the open in front of the police station. It was also opened with a short prayer. The attendance once again was much smaller than usual. Roughly, there were about 400 people, including about 50 children. Of the remaining 350, about 50-80 were spectators from the married quarters who were continually coming and going. At the meeting, besides the *imbongi*, there was also the attraction of a group of Pondo, performing a traditional dance, *indlama.*[6]

The chairman invited people to come to the table with their donations, but only a trickle of men did so. The *imbongi* was also encouraging them to go

[6] The tendency to welcome every African in these meetings, irrespective of his tribal origin, is notable.

to the table. People were delighted with his praise songs, and he seemed to be getting more money from them than the chief.

After a period of very slow progress, the chairman, according to plan, started calling out names of the various sub-chiefdoms in Thembuland, inviting them to come forward with their donations. He had a long list of names in front of him. First he called the Rarabe chiefs. Their spokesman made a speech on behalf of them all, and handed in their donation. Many more sub-chiefdoms were called, and the same pattern was repeated. The Mnqanqeni chiefs, the Jumba, the Jezile, Makhawula, Gecelo, Dalindyebo, Tshatshu, Ndungwane, Luke, Qotoyi, Maseti, Joyi, and others all came. But the Matanzima chiefs, who are not on good terms with the others, were conspicuous by their absence. All the sub-chiefdom representatives made speeches.

After the Tshatshu chiefs, a Maseti chief spoke: "There is nothing wrong, we are happy, and we stay in peace". Before one could make out whether he was being sarcastic or not, there was such an uproar from the audience that he was forced to discontinue his speech. Questions like "What do you mean?", "Who is happy?", "Why must you tell lies?", were fired at him. The poor fellow was put out; he only said a few more words, and sat down. This would never have happened in the traditional forum (*inkundla*), where every man is listened to attentively and with respect, no matter how naive he may be. Even the supposed 'tribesman', the migrant, is so keenly aware of what is going on that he cannot contain himself when a speaker talks nonsense.

The Qotoyi spokesman took up the thread and, addressing himself to the chief, said: "It is a very good thing that you have come to town so that you may see for yourself what is happening; go home and tell them that we are still surviving, though between the flesh and the nail (i.e. in a tight corner)."

The last speaker was a Joyi, who said challengingly; "I agree with the speaker who said that we are happy, and we stay in peace. Aren't we? If that were not true, we would be doing something, instead of just sitting on our backsides." Addressing the chief, he said: "Scion of the royal house, we live in strife here in Cape Town. We unwillingly left our families in the country in dire poverty, and yet we know that where there is a chief, starvation and poverty are unknown (that is, the glory of the olden days is past and gone, and chieftainship is no longer what it used to be). Chiefs are being killed in the country. Why? The people are convinced that there are no more chiefs. I want to ask you, as a chief, do we exist? I would like to remind you that, traditionally, it is not the people who are made for the chief, but it is the chief who is made for them. In fact, the chief is a chief by the grace of the people. I want to be frank with you. You should not listen to all the flattery you have been subjected to this afternoon. Take it from me, the Thembu are not at all happy about your presence here. Do you think that if they were pleased, there would be so few of them here to-day? Please, let us not fool ourselves, we are not children."

The atmosphere was growing increasingly tense, and the organizers of the meeting were becoming very uneasy about the situation. They felt that the speaker was going to get them into trouble. They sent a man to tell him that his time was up. He was annoyed by this interference, and said to the messenger, "If you are terror-stricken, I advise you to disappear immediately because I, who am not yet thoroughly inoculated with the poison of cowardice and subservience, am going to say what most people are afraid to say, though they know that it is true." The audience, which shared this view, was enthusiastically shouting "Leave him alone, let him speak. We want to hear these things."

Joyi said collectedly, "I am sorry that I had to upset the chairman. My apologies to him, the chief, and the audience. Without keeping you any longer, chief, the Thembu say that they are very glad to notice that you still remember them, but they are sorry to say that it has not been their wish to be visited by their chief because they are very unhappy, they starve and live in streams (that is, without shelter). Therefore, they have nothing to offer you, except a few coins for your train fare back home. Fare you well."

At this stage, the meeting drew to a close, and the chief, for the first time, addressed the people. These were his words, "Dear Thembu, people of Ntu,[7] Africans (*maAfrica*) therefore, I lack words to express my gratefulness to you. I thank you very much for your hospitality. It is a bad thing to speak so as to create trouble; it is better to be quiet, and then come out with something good. You all know that if there is thunder and lightning, there is usually very little rain, and yet when it is just misty, with no thunder, we usually get much rain. It is quite clear to me that there are two roads, one to salvation and the other to doom. The choice of which road to follow is left to the individual. I don't know yet which road I will take, and, therefore, I cannot promise you anything, except that I will always remember you and your words of wisdom. Stay in peace."

The moment the chief had said his last word, the *imbongi*, who could hardly contain himself, burst forth and said:

"Yhe-e-ha-a! Nongcekulana[8] has spoken,
The dark bull of Mtikrakra has spoken,
The daring and fearless son of Ngubengcuka
has spoken. The one with a wrinkly forehead
Like a lion has spoken. He has spoken, the
One that they marked as soon as he appeared.
He would have said a lot more, but only that
European dishes[9] have made my chiefs' son's
Tongue sore. I am experiencing terrifying
Things in this land of Phalo. It appears
As if civilization knows no chieftainship.
There is no need for panic, male issue of my nation, do not be
Unnecessarily perturbed multitudes of Rarabe,[10] for I have not
Foreseen anything, but all I am saying to you is that you should
Stay in readiness, because you do not know what might
Happen tomorrow. I vanish like a submarine in the sea."

The *imbongi* was making his last impression at the last gathering during their visit to Cape Town. Amidst great excitement, all the people adjourned to a feast which was held in one of the houses in Langa. Only chiefs ate at the table in the dining room; the rank and file ate meat and other less choice food in an enclosure – some semblance of a cattle kraal that was constructed especially for the occasion.

It was interesting to listen to what the few townsmen from Langa had to say about the meeting. When asked why they attended, the usual reply was, "We only came to find out the views of the various speakers on chieftainship".

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7 "Ntu" is one of the mythical founders of the Bantu-speaking peoples.
8 Nongcekulana means 'tiny man'. Chief Mtikrakra is a small man.
9 "European dishes" is used figuratively to mean conditions under the white administration.
10 A Xhosa chief of the right hand house, Ngqika's grandson. So, the *imbongi* did not confine himself only to Thembu chiefs when praising chiefs.

A few naive town girls (*ikhaba*) said that they came to see what the chief looked like. They added that they were disappointed to find that there was nothing wonderful about him. A half drunken townee, on seeing the chief on his seat of honour, said, "Is this the supposed chief?" Addressing the chief himself he shouted, "Hey, you! What are you doing here? What do you want here? Don't you know that we do not want any quislings (*oonchothoza*) here?" The councillors quickly saved the chief from the embarrassing situation by persuading the intruder to go away. Before he walked off, he defiantly asked the councillors, "Did you bring this small boy here? And if so, what do you mean by bringing us an *umantshingilane* (police-spy)?"

In the farewell meeting the chief got about R248. Over R160 of this was donated by the various Thembu chiefs. The following figures were announced:

Mnqanqeni	chiefs	...	R37
Jezile	,,	...	R26
Makawula	,,	...	R24
Mgudlwa	,,	...	R23.50
Debera	,,	...	R20
Dalindyebo	,,	...	R19
Gecelo	,,	...	R13
Matanzima	,,	(sent in)	R03
	Total amount		R165.50

A few other petty chiefs and headmen made individual contributions, but these sums were only recorded and not announced. These are the stark facts about Chief Mtikrakra's visit to Cape Town, and they could be true of any other chief who might visit town.

Some reflections on the visit

Anyone who takes an interest in what is going on in South Africa knows that, for some time now, there has been an open conflict between the chiefs and the country population. This reached a climax in the last two or three years with the disturbances in Sekhukhuniland and Zeerust earlier on, and, more recently, in Pondoland and other parts of the Transkei. In all these areas, chiefs have been killed by their people. When this happened, most observers were convinced that this was the beginning of a bigger conflict between chiefs and the people, a conflict that was thought would assume a more definite shape, and affect the urban communities too. Chief Mtikrakra, by coming to town at this critical moment, has provided us with a valuable test case. People have been anxious to see what sort of treatment he would get from the people in town. Seemingly, Mtikrakra was received like any other chief who has visited the town in the past. This was surprising and puzzling. People are fighting the chiefs in the country, and the same people here in town are bestowing on a chief a princely gift of R400. Once this happened observers began to ask themselves what the real position of the modern chief amongst the Africans was. Do the Africans accept the chief or not? A legitimate question, but inaccurately formulated, because (i) it assumes that Africans form an amorphous and undifferentiated mass, and (ii) that the process of social change is an immediate and concerted reaction. In the African community there are various elements with different sets of values and differences in outlook. Secondly, social change is a wide process covering many stages.

For the purpose of this discussion, the African society will be divided, roughly, into two communities, the urban and the rural. Even this is not accurate, because it leaves out of the urban community a large proportion of people who, though living in the country, basically share values with the urbanized communities, that is people who accept fully what is inaccurately called 'western civilization'. This includes a large section of the educated people in the country.

The 'westernized' (for want of a better word) section of the African community, whose status depends more on education and wealth than traditional positions, rejects the traditional authority as unenlightened, conservative, and incompetent. The African system is no longer the classical tribal system. It has been profoundly altered by the modern economic and political systems in which it has become enveloped; the foundations of the tribal system have been undermined at all points. The most powerful agents of this change are the capitalist economy and modern education. These two factors have the greatest influence in shaping the outlook of the African. Modern political and technical ideas, competitive cash economy, and wage labour, have increased the individual's self-reliance to a point that makes him less solicitous of the welfare and stability of other members of his lineage or tribe. This has helped to loosen kinship ties and tribal obligations. At the same time, it has completely undermined the position of the chief and other tribal dignitaries. In the urban areas, the breeding place of African nationalism, this process is so advanced that it cannot be reversed. In town, in his daily life, the African is in contact with modern civilization, and shows great readiness to accept it. So, the African society is following a path of development that is very similar to that of most of the European societies.

The 'westernized' section, under the leadership of the African nationalists, rejects traditional leaders theoretically, practically, and emotionally. This is to be expected because today in the African society one does not find just internal conflicts, but also radical change, where one section of the society bestows its allegiance to an essentially new and different set of values and interests. The function of the African nationalists, as leaders of the new outlook and representatives of the 'westernized' group, is to organize for a collective action that will be powerful enough to break down the old system. In other words, the nationalists are a dynamic force consciously seeking certain ends.

On the other hand, the wish of the traditionalists, under the leadership of the chiefs, is essentially to preserve the disintegrating tribal system. It should be remembered that the chief derived most of his power from his supposed 'special virtues'. In the eyes of many African nationalists, the chief, with his mysterious divine power, acts as a source of conservatism. There is, therefore, absolutely no ground for a compromise between these two forces, and in the end, inevitably, the conservative one will be violently destroyed by the other. In other words, what will be the days of glory to the nationalist, will be days of mourning and bitter tears to the chief. The attitude expressed in Chief Mtikrakra's meeting is potent evidence of the growing belief amongst Africans that chieftainship can no longer maintain itself.

Since a chief can expect very little support from the 'westernized' section of the African society, we will investigate the position amongst the traditionalists or conservatives. In Chief Mtikrakra's case, it was the traditionalists that attended him, with the other chiefs in particular, playing an unusually important role. This was no mere coincidence. One would expect all traditionalists,

socially, to belong together, to be tied together by an undisputed allegiance to a single body of values and interests. Secondly, the conservatives would be expected still to regard the chief as their supreme leader and judge. Their trust in him, their affection and respect would maintain their loyalty to him.

On examining more closely the speeches quoted in the narrative account of Chief Mtikrakra's visit, it will be noticed that, scathing as most of them were, none rejected chieftainship as an institution. The objects of attack were the persons occupying the office, not the office itself. This section of Africans, therefore, still accepts chieftainship in principle. The tragedy of their position is that most of them no longer trust, love, or respect the incumbents of the office because they regard them as government stooges. Thus chieftainship, for the conservative African, has both a negative and a positive value. This explains the inconsistent behaviour of the conservative African towards the chiefs.

Emotionally, the conservative African still finds it painful to forgo all his traditional values and sever completely relations with the chief. He still harbours a vague and faint hope that 'things might change one day'. "After all, not all chiefs are the same," he says. He thus contradicts his own view that all chiefs are government employees. It is for this reason that the Thembu, whose chiefs in the past have put up some resistance against such government schemes as rehabilitation and stock limitation, are still prepared to receive a chief in town, even though half-heartedly. Though, objectively, the Thembu had cause to refuse to welcome Chief Mtikrakra, those who attended the meeting felt that "they could not very well disgrace themselves amongst strangers by boycotting their chief, and thus showing a lack of *ubuntu* (humanity)." They still believe that "it is a natural and divine practice for human beings to have a chief to guard and protect, for even insects have great regard for their king, and never leave it exposed". This is empty talk, since already four chiefs, including a Thembu chief, have been boycotted in their visits to town. Of the other three, two were Pondo and one Bhaca. Their people would not have anything to do with them "because of their activities in the country".

More than this, the chiefs, who are being continually attacked by the African nationalists as quislings and traitors, in order to save face, had not only to make sure that their fellow chief's visit was a success by contributing more than 65 per cent of the total amount donated to him, but also to satisfy the demands of the people as interpreted by the national leaders. They did this by making speeches criticising chieftainship. This could not be altogether genuine, as the speakers themselves were chiefs.

Under these circumstances, what is the chief likely to do? The people 'feel like a train without an engine' because they reject the system the chief is part of and, therefore, he cannot lead them in the direction they wish. He is defending his position against national political leaders. This is clearly shown by the determination of some chiefs to rid the country of all 'agitators' as they call these leaders.

Owing to lack of education, most of the chiefs are not qualified to be leaders in the national struggle, and they will rather hang on precariously as a rigid superstructure on a dynamic base until the whole structure explodes. Judging from the activities of the chiefs in the country, this is likely. The position of the few educated chiefs is slightly different. They have a chance of acquiring a position in the national struggle, if they are still, as individuals, acceptable to the modern political leaders.

In this complex situation even the conservative migrant pays to the chief at

the most only emotional allegiance. The conservative African, rationally, like any other people, is fully aware of the correspondence between the functioning of political authorities and his well-being. In time, this awareness will help him to disregard any ethical or moral considerations in dealing with the chiefs. We have already seen how the Thembu partly overcame their inhibitions in dealing with Chief Mtikrakra who, personally, has done nothing against them so far. If he seeks to maintain the confidence of his people, Mtikrakra will take the hint he was given when the Thembu told him that "they are in no position to receive a chief because their hearts are broken, and that they stay in rivers". Even in terms of money contributions, Mtikrakra was not really well-received. His gift of R432 when compared with the R2000 Sabata, the last Thembu chief to visit the town before Mtikrakra, received is nothing. At the beginning of 1959 Sabata collected R1000 in Langa alone. More important than the money is the spirit in which the chief is received; as we have seen, money may be donated for considerations other than political ones.

It seems, then, that emergent South Africa has no room for chieftainship. In South Africa things have gone so far that by the time there is a change, the chief will have lost all the support he has ever enjoyed. As a conservative regretfully put it, "There is no longer chieftainship; chieftainship is long past and gone".

APPENDIX

THE GENEALOGY OF THE THEMBU CHIEFS

The main line

Observations on Land Reform Administration in Egypt[1]

by Dr. Doreen Warriner[2]

The Agrarian Reform Decree, promulgated in Egypt in August 1952, immediately after the revolution, was primarily a political and social measure, aiming at the abolition of the large estates and the distribution of their land to the fellahin. In practice, however, it has turned out to be an agricultural policy also, since from the first the reformers foresaw that redistribution of land might reduce production, and aimed at avoiding this danger by the establishment of a new form of farm organization, the supervised co-operatives. In its agricultural effects, the reform – unlike others – has been markedly successful but its social effects have been much smaller than was anticipated, and its direct benefits have been confined to a small section of the farm population.

Its indirect effects, however, have been wide, since it was the first step in the introduction of a broad policy for the regeneration of rural Egypt; as such, it was essential, because it was the means of removing from political and economic power the large landowners who had blocked the way to the economic and social progress of the country. To describe all the measures that have been carried out in the last ten years – the first stages in the construction of the High Dam, land reclamation and settlement schemes, and the combined centres rural services programme, to name only a few – is outside the scope of this article. But they must be mentioned, if the reform is to be seen in its true perspective as one among many measures dealing with the problem of farm poverty. The policy has not been an 'integrated comprehensive programme', that counsel of perfection so tirelessly preached in U.N. reports on land reform in the under-developed world. On the contrary, the approach has been empirical and dynamic, dealing with needs as they arise. To those who knew the old Egypt, the continued prevalence of bureaucratic muddle, intrigue and inertia is not surprising: what does surprise is that there are patches of good organization, and that efforts to remedy mistakes are made and sustained.

The scope and administrative problems of the reform

In carrying out the agrarian reform itself, two main administrative problems have arisen, the enforcement of the law, and the organization of the new compulsory co-operative societies. Some of the difficulties encountered were a result of weak administration; others are inherent in the conditions of the country.

The main point of the Agrarian Reform Decree of 1952 was its first clause 'No person may own more than 200 feddans[3] of land'. Land holdings in excess of this maximum were to be requisitioned by the Government over a period of five years, against compensation, and the requisitioned land was to be distributed among small farmers and agricultural labourers, in holdings of between two and five feddans. The new owners were to pay, in instalments over a period of thirty years (later amended to forty), the full purchase price of the

[1] These observations were made in 1954-55 and in 1961.

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[3] One feddan = 1.038 acres.

land (assessed at seventy times the basic land tax) plus interest on the state bonds issued in compensation, and also 15 per cent of the purchase price, to cover costs of administration. Until the purchase price is fully paid the holding may not be sold, mortgaged or divided, though it may be inherited.[4]

Since the maximum individual holding of 200 feddans (or acres) appears low by English standards, redistribution on this basis naturally appeared drastically egalitarian to English opinion. In fact, the intensity of cultivation in Egypt is many times higher than in England, and a landholding of 200 feddans yields its owner an annual net income of at least £4,000; thus the maximum was in Egyptian conditions rather high. Some of the large estates were far larger than the maximum, amounting to several thousand feddans.

Thus, the effect of expropriation was to cut off only the apex of the social pyramid. Holdings above the maximum numbered 2,000, and took up 20 per cent of the cultivated land area (1.2 million out of a total of 6 million feddans). Holdings between five and 200 feddans numbered about 200,000, and took up 45 per cent of the land. The small holdings under five feddans numbered 2,600,000 (out of a total of 2,800,000 properties) and took up the remaining 35 per cent of the land. Of these small holdings, two million owned less than one feddan, and since two feddans is considered the minimum necessary to support a family, most of these small owners rented additional small lots from larger owners. In addition, there was and still is a large section of the fellahin which owns no land at all, but lives by renting small lots, or as farm labourers only employed for seasonal work. Since the bottom of the pyramid is so wide, even a much more radical reform could not have provided enough land for all the landless, nor was it ever expected that redistribution would benefit a large proportion of the fellahin. Of the total area of 1.2 million feddans in holdings above the maximum, it was estimated that about half would be liable to expropriation, so that at most 300,000 families might receive land through redistribution. Rent regulation, however, was expected to benefit the large number of landless or sublanded tenant cultivators, the poorest of the fellahin.

In the event, the scope of redistribution has been much smaller than was anticipated, and rent regulation has proved unenforceable, after a short period in which it was effective.

Evasion of the provisions relating to expropriation and distribution was facilitated by defects in the law itself. Expropriation by the state was not compulsory for landowners with holdings above the maximum; they were allowed to sell their excess land privately, in lots not exceeding five feddans, to farmers whose total holdings after purchase did not exceed ten feddans. This provision was included as a compromise, to secure the support of the Ministry of Finance, and unfortunately its effects were not foreseen. Immediately after the promulgation of the law it became evident that private sales were proceeding at a rate which would soon dispose of all the land subject to expropriation,

[4] The Agrarian Land Reform Law attempted to check sub-division of small farms in general by stipulating that holdings of less than five feddans should not be sub-divided, and that where questions of sub-division arise through inheritance or other reasons, the parties should agree as to which person should assume ownership of the land, and compensate other claimants; if no agreement can be reached, the land should be sold by public auction. It is unlikely that this provision has been effective, except in regard to the new holdings distributed under the reform. Only one heir can inherit such holdings; preference is given to those working in agriculture, and if all members of the family satisfy this condition, then preference is to be given to the wife, then to the child. If there are several children, lots drawn between them determine the heir.

leaving none for distribution to the landless cultivators on the estates, to whom the law accorded first priority in claims for holdings. Moreover, many of these sales were not made to small farmers. Consequently this provision was rescinded, and private sales were forbidden after 31st October 1952, though they have continued in contravention of the law. How much land escaped expropriation, through private sales, legal or illegal, is not known: the present writer's guess is that the area may have been between 300,000 and 400,000 feddans – about as great as the area officially redistributed. Most of these sales were made by the owners of the smaller properties above the maximum: the very large estates could not dispose of their properties in this way, and appear to have been taken over intact.

Family transfers were another method of evasion. The law allowed landowners to transfer ownership of agricultural land (in excess of the 200 feddans maximum) to not more than two children, with a maximum of 50 feddans per child, but there was no provision to prevent the landowner buying additional land in the name of other children or other relatives. To check this practice, a 1958 amendment to the law limited family ownership to 300 feddans.

Weakness in enforcement in the early stages was also to some extent due to the cumbersome organization charged with the implementation of the reform. The law established for this purpose a Higher Committee for Agrarian Reform, an inter-departmental body, presided over by the Minister of Agriculture, and representing the Under-Secretaries of State for Agriculture, Social Affairs, Public Works, Finance and Economic Affairs, and including seven other persons appointed by the Council of Ministers. As its executive body the Land Reform Agency was created, with funds provided in the first instance by a loan of £1 million from the Agricultural Credit and Co-operative Bank (later the reform became self-financing). Decisions were delayed by this committee control; there was inter-departmental conflict, particularly between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Affairs, as to respective functions. It was not until the functions of the Agency were taken over by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, created in 1956 with a smaller and purely inter-departmental managing board to replace the Higher Committee, that enforcement was energized. During the period of the union with Syria, there were separate Ministries of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform in each country, controlled at the central government level by a single Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, a position held until 1961 by Sayed Marei, the principal architect of the policy of co-ordinating the reform with technical progress in agriculture; since the dissolution of the union, this administrative arrangement has been discontinued in Egypt and there are again separate ministries.

When it was found that the total area of land available for redistribution fell far short of the expected 600,000 feddans, the scope of the reform was extended by supplementary legislation relating to categories of land which had hitherto not been subject to expropriation. Entailed estates ('benevolent *waqf*'), exempt under the original law, were in 1957 made liable to expropriation on the same terms as other large properties; this amendment made about 100,000 more feddans available for redistribution. Companies engaged in land reclamation, also formerly exempt, were in 1957 obliged to sell 25 per cent of the area reclaimed to the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, for redistribution. A few thousand feddans were also obtained by the expropriation of foreign companies.

Effects of the reform

According to the most recent official figures available, for mid-1961, about 500,000 feddans[5] have been expropriated (under the original law and the supplementary legislation) and 430,000 feddans have been distributed to 160,000 families. Thus only some seven per cent of the total cultivated area has been redistributed, and only a similarly small proportion of farm families have received land.

However, the effects of redistribution on the agrarian structure have not been negligible, since it can be presumed that an equally large area of land has changed hands through private sales. Comparison of the figures for distribution of land ownership in 1952 and 1957 suggests that the farms under five feddans at the latter date represented 44 per cent of the agricultural land area as compared with 35 per cent in 1952.[6] But the holdings with less than one feddan still represent 70 per cent of the total number of properties and take up only 14 per cent of the total area in holdings. Two million farmers still have less than one feddan, while the number of landless cultivators has probably increased.

It is this high population pressure on the land that accounts for the failure to enforce a reduction of rents. The 1952 law fixed the maximum money rents per feddan at seven times the basic land tax, which in effect meant reductions of between 30 and 40 per cent below prevailing levels. Sharecropping rents were to be reduced to one half the net produce of the land, as against one half or more of the gross produce before the reform. Greater security of tenure for tenant cultivators was provided by legislation supplementary to the 1952 law, which stipulated that all existing tenancy contracts should be extended for another year. This provision has twice been extended, for a period of three years on each occasion, in respect of half the land leased.

In the two years after the promulgation of the law, rent reductions certainly took place. Land prices fell, as a result of the private sales of land and the fall in the price of cotton, to about half their previous level (that is from about £600 to £300 per feddan) and rents fell also. The fear of further expropriation naturally disposed landowners to accept the legally fixed rates. As the majority of the fellahin rent some land, this reduction represented a widespread and large gain in income to the poorer cultivators. But the gain was only temporary. As land prices rose again and landowners recovered from the shock, rents rose again. In early 1961 it was officially admitted that the rent reduction clauses of the law were not generally enforced, though tenants have to some degree at least benefited by greater security.

The real difficulty in exercising control over rents is that the demand for land still greatly exceeds the supply. Most properties, except the very small, rent some land to cultivators, by verbal agreement and for short periods, often only for one crop season. To keep all these agreements under surveillance is administratively impossible, for they are not genuine leasehold contracts so much as a method of wage payment. It is notoriously difficult to enforce legal rent control in any country when the people whom the law is designed to protect acquiesce in its evasion. The problem exists in all overpopulated countries; and no administrative measures are likely to be effective until the supply of land is increased and industrialization draws labour off the land – both long-term processes.

[5] Official figures quoted to me by a representative of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform in early 1961 gave a higher total; the explanation may be that this included some categories of land not included in the above total, such as settlements on reclaimed land.

[6] See D. Warriner, *Land Reform and Development in the Middle East*, 2nd edition. Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 194-5.

Thus by 1960 the social benefits of reform were limited to the small section of the farm population which had gained in income through redistribution. Other programmes – land settlement and the rural social welfare centres – were still being carried out, but land reform was almost completed. Widespread evasion of the rent control provisions fostered cynicism.

Consequently in 1961 the President decreed a second agrarian reform (officially described as the Decree for the Amendment of the Agrarian Reform Law). The new law reduced the maximum holding from 200 to 100 feddans, and also restricted acquisition of land (in addition to areas already owned) to 50 feddans (providing that the total area owned does not exceed the new maximum). Land in excess of the maximum was to be disposed of to small farmers, in accordance with rules to be prescribed by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform; otherwise it would be expropriated on the terms laid down in the 1952 law. It is officially estimated that under the new law another 300,000 feddans will be distributed. More drastic penalties for evasion are laid down, and obviously the intention is to carry out the second reform more rigorously than the first. Whether this attempt will be successful remains to be seen. The administration is more effective than it was in 1952, and there has certainly been a change in attitudes to expropriation. Whereas in 1952 public opinion, in so far as it was articulate, regarded the rather high maximum as outrageously low, in 1961 the reduction of the maximum seemed common sense.

Another decree, issued at the same time, improved the position of the recipients of land by exempting them from paying half the purchase price of the land distributed to them, and freeing them from payment of interest on the instalments of the purchase price, transferring to the state the obligation of meeting these payments. In the first stages, the fact that the farmers themselves bore the whole cost of the reform was justified on the grounds that the beneficiaries were in any case in a much more favourable position than the majority of the fellahin; but in the opinion of the farmers, the instalments are too high, and this attitude now has to be taken into account.

The supervised co-operatives

The most interesting feature of the administration are the 'land reform co-operatives' as they were first called, to distinguish them from the ordinary agricultural co-operative societies; now they are officially known as 'supervised co-operatives'. Membership of these is compulsory for all recipients of land. The Agrarian Reform Law defined their functions, stating that they were to come under the general law relating to co-operative societies. (At the time this was the Co-operative Law of 1944: later, in 1956, this was revised by the new Co-operative Law.) However, the functions of the newly constituted societies were to go far beyond the normal activities of agricultural societies in Egypt, which were concerned mainly with credit and supply. The new co-operatives were to advance loans to their members and provide them with all farm requisites, such as seed, fertilisers, livestock, agricultural machinery and means of storage and transport of crops. They were to undertake the organization of cultivation "in the most efficient manner, including seed selection, varieties of crops, pest control, and the maintenance and improvement of irrigation". They were to sell all the principal crops on behalf of their members, after deducting from the price of such crops instalments in respect of the purchase price of the land, government taxes, and interest on agricultural and other loans. Finally,

they were to render "all other agricultural and social services required by members".

The societies were to work under the supervision of an official appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Minister of Social Affairs was empowered to issue decisions necessary for the regulation of their work, within the terms of the Decree. Supervision has now become the responsibility of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform.

The supervised co-operatives differed from ordinary agricultural societies in several important features. First, membership was compulsory, as all recipients of land were obliged to become members. Second, their functions were much wider, extending to the organization of production, and the marketing of the main crops (that is cotton and wheat, maize being retained for human consumption, and berseem (Egyptian clover) for animal fodder). Third, their functions were to be controlled officially. A further important social difference is that their members are all small farmers, with holdings of much the same size, whereas the ordinary agricultural co-operative societies include in their membership both large and small farmers.

The law did not prescribe the principle of their financial organization; this was left to be defined in the by-laws of each society, which differ to some extent. A feature common to all societies is that each member may acquire a number of shares equal to the number of feddans assigned to him, that is two, or at the most, three. In ordinary co-operative societies members may acquire shares in any number from one upwards, provided that their total holding does not exceed one-fifth of the society's capital.

Like other co-operatives, the new societies constituted under the Decree were to have the right of forming unions and federations. Regional co-operative unions have been organized, and in 1958 a General Union was established in Cairo. In 1960 there were 326 supervised co-operatives. The larger ones have now been in existence since 1953 or 1954, as large estates were expropriated first, while the smaller ones are younger.

The object of creating this new form of organization was to provide an administrative mechanism to collect the instalments due from the recipients of land, and at the same time to prevent a decline in production and if possible to increase it. Had social independence been the only consideration, it would have been quite practicable to divide up the large properties into small farms of two or three feddans, which could have supported a family at a higher level of income than that of the majority of Egyptian farmers. There was, however, a real risk of a decline in production if no replacement were provided for the landowners' managerial functions in the supply of seed and fertiliser and the marketing of cotton; even when the whole estate was leased in small lots to share-croppers or tenants, these functions were always carried out by the estate management for the cotton crop. Moreover, the largest estates had been on the whole efficient in cultivation. To keep up the former level of output would have been impossible for independent small farmers. It was essential to maintain production, and desirable to increase it, to reduce the growing necessity of wheat imports and increase the production of cotton, which represents sixty per cent of Egypt's total exports.

Supervision is both technical and financial. The co-operatives are controlled jointly by the manager, appointed by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, and a board of directors elected by the members from among themselves. The manager is a highly trained agriculturalist; he is assisted by an administrative

staff of book-keepers, agronomists, mechanics, storekeepers and foremen. He is not a member of the board, but can refer decisions with which he disagrees to the Ministry, which can override the decisions of the board, and so retains ultimate control.

Although officials decide on crop rotations and methods of farming, in conjunction with the board, cultivation is the responsibility of the individual farmers. The land is divided into several large fields, each under a single crop. Each farmer has a piece of land in three different fields, so that his holding is always under three different crops.

Seed, pesticides, and fertilisers are distributed to the cultivators and are debited to the account of each. Where machinery is used (and it is being used to a much greater extent than before), tractors plough straight across the large fields and cultivators are debited with the cost of cultivation per acre. After the crop is harvested and sold, the farmer is credited with the proceeds of the sale from his holding; an advance is made pending the sale. The difference between costs and profits is his income, after deductions for the annual instalments of the purchase price of the land, taxes and interest on loans (and for the profits made by the co-operative). Thus individual farmers have an incentive to cultivate well, although methods of farming are decided from above.

Output per acre in the supervised co-operatives has certainly increased, although the statistical data available do not permit comparison of the rate of increase of their total agricultural production as compared with the rate of increase for Egypt. A weighted average, calculated from official data[7] for the area under cotton and total cotton output in supervised co-operatives in 16 districts, shows that the yield per acre rose by 45 per cent between the pre-requisition period and 1959. During the period 1952 and 1959, the increase in the average cotton yield for Egypt was 15 per cent. The fact that the increase in cotton yields in the co-operatives has been so much above the average would indicate that their overall production increase has also been higher, though certainly not in the same proportion as for cotton.

The system which began as a method of increasing production has now become a method of enforced saving, as is shown by the financial results of the co-operatives. In 1961 profit and loss statements for the co-operatives under his supervision were provided for my inspection by the Director of Agrarian Reform in the Shibin-el-Kom land reform area of Minufia province. In 1959 profits were low, totalling £E11,833: one co-operative showed a loss, several showed only small profits, while the two largest made profits of £E2,500 each. In 1960, statements for nine co-operatives showed aggregate profits of £E42,283, or an average of £E5,000 per society: four of the largest made profits between £E7,000 and £E8,000. Profits were allocated to reserves (40 per cent on the average), dividends on sales (30 per cent), social development (20 per cent) and refunds to members due from sales (10 per cent). The high profits shown in this region are above the average, because the co-operatives have raised the yield of cotton by 83 per cent (from 3·5 cantars per feddan in 1956 to 6·4 in 1959 and 1960), a remarkable result.

Thus from a technical and economic standpoint the new form of organization has undoubtedly been successful. The question which arises is whether it is socially successful also. Clearly these organizations are not co-operatives in the ordinary sense, since membership is not voluntary, and they are subject to

[7] *Information and Statistics Relating to the Agrarian Reform in the Southern Region*, U.A.R., Central Ministry of Agrarian Reform, 1960.

a high degree of control from above. But it was obviously the intention of the law that members should participate in management, through the elected boards. The extent to which they do so is of course difficult for an outsider to elicit from a few visits to board meetings.

At first the boards of management were certainly timid. Judging by personal observations in 1954 and 1955, their role was that of a works council, voicing complaints and giving advice, rather than that of an elected body managing its own affairs. This was not surprising, since the fellahin are docile and subservient to authority; the habits of centuries are not easily broken. Moreover, the size of these big businesses, with their large profits and with memberships of one to two thousand farmers, is itself an obstacle to self-government by an illiterate village community. On the technical side, financial control is necessary, since investment mostly takes the form of large and costly equipment, such as high-powered diesel pumps. In the absence of official control, members would certainly opt for less investment and more distribution of profits in the form of dividends.

One of the great administrative difficulties in the early stages was to find managers of the right type, who would encourage participation. The officials available were chiefly former estate-managers, who gave orders, and so long as this attitude survived the farmers must have felt that they had only changed masters; their incomes were higher, in that the burden of the instalments and other deductions was less than the rents taken by the former landlord, and they enjoyed secure tenure, but they were still socially subordinate. Consequently the Ministry of Agrarian Reform has set up a special training course for co-operative managers, which indoctrinates a new social attitude. The aim is to foster the growth of independence. In 1961, there had emerged a new *élite* of professional land reformers, whose sense of social responsibility is impressive. The members of the new profession are men of few words, able to listen long and decide quickly.

One example of fostered participation observed in 1961 may be quoted because it appeared not in one of the numerous show pieces, but in a remote district, Edfu, 70 miles north of Aswan. An estate of 3,000 feddans had been expropriated from a foreign owner, and the land distributed to 1,100 farmers, so that holdings average three feddans. Sugar cane is the chief crop, with high yields. The co-operative society was formed in 1958, and had only recently been coaxed into activity.

In 1960 the society made a profit of £E1,800, to its members a fabulous sum. The board, consisting of eight members, each representing one hundred or more farmers, met to discuss how the profits were to be invested. Two members proposed that the station and main street should be lighted and this was agreed. The Director of Agrarian Reform in Aswan Province proposed that £E200 should be invested in a small café, to attract tourists visiting the nearby temple, because this would bring in a good return; a long debate ensued as to whether this project should be financed from capital or profits, the members insisting that capital was the right source, as they wanted to invest part of the profits in a project dearer to their hearts, the rebuilding of a mosque. They had submitted a project to the Ministry of Agrarian Reform for approval and Cairo had not replied: according to the law, they argued, they were therefore entitled to proceed, and proposed to engage a local contractor. So it was agreed that members should contribute £E300 by subscription, while the co-operative would contribute £E100 from its profits.

Other business included lively discussion as to whether the visiting doctor, whose services had recently been engaged, should use the co-operative office for

consultation; it was decided that a room in a farmhouse would be preferable and one was offered and accepted; it was decided that members should pay two piastres as fee for his services. There was a complaint that an official had failed to pay a farmer for the sum due for his sugar-cane crop, and the official was penalized. Another complaint, that the government drainage had spoilt five feddans of land, led to much to-and-fro between officials and the board as to the appropriate compensation. On every question, large or small, the board carried its points slowly but firmly and the officials accepted their decisions.

Whether these co-operatives will succeed in becoming fully independent is uncertain. In 1959, the President asked the Minister of Agrarian Reform to relax control wherever possible. Accordingly, official supervision was removed from two of the most successful societies, Zafaran and Bourgaya, and in 1961 it was stated officially that 80 others were to become independent in the near future. Incentive has been substituted for compulsion in marketing; members now receive premiums on the market prices of crops sold through the co-operatives.

Though the supervised co-operatives are not co-operative societies as the term is usually understood, since membership is not voluntary, neither are they collective farms, or preliminaries towards collectivization. In all agrarian reform policies, much depends on the efficiency of administration at the village level; and here the Egyptian reform has successfully evolved its own pattern, which is at the same time a new type of group farming, combining the advantages of large-scale management with the incentive of individual cultivation. Technically the results are good, and though the management is still preponderantly official, still great efforts have been made to use modern management techniques in encouraging participation.

Further evolution of the supervised co-operatives

Since the supervised co-operatives have proved successful in raising yields, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform has now adopted this type of group farming as the basis of the tenure system in new land settlement schemes, as for instance, the big Kom-Ombo scheme for the re-settlement of the 17,000 Nubian families, whose land 150 miles to the south will be flooded by the High Dam reservoir. At present these people are poor, with insufficient land (10,000 feddans in all) which carries only a winter crop. Most of the men have hitherto been migrant labourers, going to work in Cairo; it is hoped that re-settlement on holdings of two feddans, cropped all the year, will provide full employment and stabilize their economic and social life.

The 34,000 feddans of land for their settlement was in 1961 being reclaimed by the Kom-Ombo Company (nationalized in 1961). (Another 10,000 feddans of land reclaimed by this Company was purchased in 1960 by the Ministry, for small farm settlement under the 1957 amendment to the Agrarian Reform Law, compelling land reclamation companies to sell 25 per cent to the Ministry.) It was intended to move the first thousand families in 1962, another 4,000 in 1963, on land irrigated by new pumps using the existing canals, and the remaining 12,000 families in 1964 and 1965, when the water from the High Dam should be available to supply the rest of the land. In 1961, leaders of these communities were already paying regular visits to the Director of Agrarian Reform in Aswan to discuss their problems, such as whether they could be re-settled in groups, among friends; and whether they should bring their small cows, or would the Ministry advance credit for new cattle? The difficult problem

of whether a man who had owned more than two feddans before should receive more than other settlers who had owned less was solved by the decision that he should be compensated in livestock, but that all settlers should have the same-sized farms.

This careful preparation, to ensure that the change should be as easy as possible, by explanation and discussion with the leaders of the communities before the move, is evidence of the experience gained since 1952. It contrasts sharply with the spirit of the brash young men who spoke of 'changing people' in their pristine enthusiasm for the Tahrir (Liberation) project, in the first years after the revolution.

Fragmentation of farm holdings

Another application of the method of supervised co-operation can be seen in the experiments carried out in villages which have not received land under the reform. These were intended to deal with fragmentation. As mentioned above, the majority of the farm holdings of Egypt are less than one feddan in size, and these holdings are broken up into several parcels of land. The small size of holdings is due to population growth, which results in new subdivision of the holding in each generation. The law of inheritance prescribes division of the holdings between heirs, with equal shares to each son and half a share to each daughter. Although the Agrarian Reform Law tried to prevent subdivision of the smaller holdings, it is unlikely to succeed in this, for experience shows that legislation for this purpose in countries with high population density and rapid rates of growth is generally ineffective.

Nor is consolidation of fragmented holdings a practicable remedy, since the majority of farms, even if consolidated, would remain uneconomically small; and compulsion would encounter resistance. Yet fragmentation is an obstacle to better farming, because of the wastage of water and labour entailed by the great number of separate small irrigation schemes.

To overcome the drawbacks of fragmentation, without consolidation, and with no change of ownership, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform has experimented in the introduction of the field lay-out used in the supervised co-operatives in villages where fragmentation has gone to extreme lengths, and very small holdings predominate.

In these pilot projects, farmers are asked to agree to a new field lay-out, by which the land of the village is divided into several large fields, each extending over a large number of holdings or fragments of holdings. All farmers in each field must sow the same crop, and follow the same rotation. Thus in winter one field is under wheat, one under berseem, and one is fallow cultivation in preparation for cotton. Most of the farmers therefore will have all their land under one crop in each crop season, and so lack other crops. They adjust this situation by agreements to exchange produce or land among themselves. A farmer whose land is under cotton will exchange part of the crop with neighbours or relatives, for what is agreed to be an equivalent amount of wheat or berseem. In the following season, he grows wheat, and takes cotton and berseem from others. No standard basis for these adjustments can be found, and farmers are left to sort them out among themselves.[8]

[8] At Nawag, I was informed that it worked well because relatives could agree between themselves on the method of exchange. At Minshat Sultan, the principle was to exchange feddan for feddan; this would clearly not work satisfactorily if land varied in quality, but the villagers asserted that it did not, and that anyway the exchange was reversed in the next crop season, and so was satisfactory in the long run.

As incentives to agree to this system, farmers in these villages are offered, through the existing agricultural co-operative society, large inducements in the form of fertilisers, pesticides and seed on credit at cost price, loans being repayable when the crops are sold.

Two villages visited early in 1961 had achieved remarkably good results from the use of the new system. Nawag (in Gharbia province) was the first village to introduce it. The farmers told me that they had been very unwilling to agree to introduce the unified rotation, and had at first consented to try it out on 100 feddans (out of a total area of 1,800 feddans, divided into 1,600 holdings and 3,500 plots).

Finding that crop yields on the 100 feddans were much higher, they then agreed to put all the land under the new system. The increase in yields had been surprising; cotton output per feddan had risen from 3½ cantars to 7½ cantars in 1958 (in which year the Egyptian yield averaged 5·2 cantars); maize output per feddan had risen from 8 to 10 ardebs (average for Egypt 8). Similar increases were quoted at Minshat Sultan (in Minufia province), a much bigger village. Farm incomes in both villages had risen considerably.

Of course these good results were due not only to the unified rotation, but also to the much larger input of fertilisers and pesticides which the farmers had not been able to afford on the old credit terms. Both were poor villages, with none of the new equipment which can be seen on the supervised co-operatives, but both had achieved, with much pride, a firm advance in conditions which hitherto precluded progress.

Obviously 'public relations' had been hard at it. The first meeting, to invite consent, had been preceded by a feast. They had been chosen as the pioneers, the Nawag people told me, because of their intelligence, shown in their purchase of fertilisers from the Agricultural and Co-operative Credit Bank (and they were indeed intelligent). Obviously too the system had specially advantageous conditions in these villages, where there are no properties larger than 15 feddans, and very few over two feddans.

In 1961 several other villages had introduced the new lay-out, and it was then the intention of the Ministry to introduce it in one hundred others. If it can be more widely extended, it should result in a considerable increase of output per acre, without elaborate and costly procedures. But it is something of an administrative *tour de force*, and its extension depends on sustained drive from the Ministry: villages are not likely to adopt it of their own accord, since the inducements are essential to agreement and to higher productivity.

Reorganization of the ordinary co-operatives

The special credit advantages enjoyed by the supervised co-operatives was naturally felt as an injustice by the ordinary agricultural co-operative societies, many of which were old and stagnant. These number about 3,500 and are chiefly credit and supply societies. They received wider privileges under the new Co-operative Law of 1956, and were assisted by the Rural Credit Scheme, introduced in 1957. But it is asserted that these credits benefited chiefly the larger farmers, who often dominated the management in their own interests.

At the end of 1960, the long rivalry between the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform and the Ministry of Social Affairs ended with a victory for the former, which took over the responsibility for the ordinary agricultural societies from the Ministry of Social Affairs (consumer co-operative societies being at the same time transferred to the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry).

This administrative change was the prelude to a reorganization of the old agricultural societies on the supervised credit system, with the purpose of extending credit to enable their members to raise output to specific targets. State funds allocated to agriculture under the Five Year Plan were to be provided, and it was the intention of the Ministry to appoint an official to reside in each village, to supervise the use of the funds and the fulfilment of the targets. Reorganization of the societies, to give stronger representation to the smaller farmer, was then under discussion in early 1961. Marketing through the society was not to be compulsory for members, but it was intended to offer incentives through price subsidies to ensure that the main crops are sold co-operatively, as is now the practice for the supervised co-operatives under the land reform.

Conclusion

From an agricultural standpoint therefore, the administration of the land reform in Egypt has been enterprising and constructive, branching out from the experience gained through organizing the expropriated estates for higher productivity into experiments for agricultural reorganization in villages not affected by the reform. Thus the policy has been more evolutionary and less revolutionary than it at first appeared. If the renewal of the revolutionary impetus through the second agrarian reform leads to a more effective enforcement of redistribution, then greater equality should provide a firmer basis for these new forms of induced or energized co-operation.

Book Reviews

PANCHAYATI RAJ, by S. K. Dey; *Asia Publishing House, London*, 1961; pp. 139; 16s.

It is always valuable to read a book by a minister on a subject within his portfolio, since it provides useful evidence of his philosophy and approach to the problems involved. Mr. S. K. Dey is the Indian Government's Minister of Community Development and Co-operatives whose Ministry is also responsible for the Union Government's duties in respect of panchayats (village councils). He sees this system of 'democratic decentralization' as inextricably linked with community development and the co-operative movement and he places it in its context of the 'three basic village institutions' – school, co-operative and panchayat. He also traces its origin from the old traditional panchayat council to the modern elected statutory body of the same name responsible for the development of the village – a new wine in an old bottle. As he puts it, the old panchayat raj was a unit of government at the village level; the new panchayati raj is intended to mean a whole system of government.

Mr. Dey is, rightly, an enthusiast and his whole style of writing shows it. This book ranges over the whole field of the philosophy of government and its relations with the people, but Mr. Dey is also a realist in pinpointing inadequacies both on the part of the government and the people. The modern panchayat is somewhat different from the ancient one; it is an institutionalized attempt to allow the revolutionary community development concept of 'the people's choice' to mean the planning of development of their own village in addition to carrying out certain statutory and taxation functions.

It is perhaps too soon to attempt to evaluate this gallant effort to provide a governmental framework for real democracy in action at the village level, since one must allow time for the problems treated by it to be solved. Mr. Dey himself poses one problem over the supervision of the panchayats; he feels that supervision of a democratic institution by a government functionary working under remote control is an anachronism. This still, however, is the case wherever a system of district administration appointed by the centre works side by side with locally elected bodies. There are also the other new problems of partisan political rivalry and of conflicting power groups caused by the contests for the new statutory powers at village level. If the new system can maintain the old idea of a concensus of village opinion working towards unanimity within a modern institutionalized framework then it will have great relevance for many other countries. Those interested in the problems of local government at the village level and how to work *with* people rather than *for* people would be well advised to read this book. It is a work dealing with principles and philosophy rather than with detailed organization but it is certainly none the worse for that.

PETER DU SAUTOY.

THE TOWN CLERK IN ENGLISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, by T. E. Headrick; *George Allen and Unwin, London*, 1962; pp. 223; 25s.

Mr. Headrick is an American who came to this country on a Fulbright Scholarship to Oxford in order to study English local government. He came

with no preconceived ideas on what particular aspect of local government to concentrate but after a few months' study the office of town clerk began to intrigue him. This fascinating book is the outcome of his researches, in which he was assisted by the Society of Town Clerks, and in the course of which he had a large number of interviews not only with town clerks but with mayors and chairmen of authorities in all parts of the country.

In dealing with the statutory and judicial conceptions of the town clerk's office, Mr. Headrick does well to stress that 'an officer's primary and overriding duty is to the council as a whole, not to one committee or one party or one very influential alderman'. He might well have added 'or the leader of the majority party'.

The most valuable parts of the book are the chapters devoted to the relationship between the town clerk and the elected representatives and of his developing role as the co-ordinator of the whole of the local authority's administration.

On the interplay of personalities between the town clerk and the members of his council, Mr. Headrick has much sound advice to offer as well as many witty sidelights as to the methods employed by various town clerks in different parts of the country. How many present holders of the office must wish they had been born earlier when they read of Joseph Heron, sometime Town Clerk of Manchester, who is reported to have risen in a council meeting and to have said "Councillor X, you know nothing about this matter. Please sit down".

The tactics of the 19th century are not those of today and there is no doubt that to carry out his duties to the whole council and to the whole body of the ratepayers a great deal of skill in the art of man management is called for on the part of a town clerk. While appreciating the soundness of the principle that councillors decide, officers advise, Mr. Headrick sees the solution to the ever-growing complexity of local government and to the proper use of the professional knowledge and expertise of the officer in retaining him not only to execute policy but also to advise on the formulation of it. There is also much food for thought in the description of our committee system and the manner in which it works in practice which could well be studied with advantage by elected representatives and officers alike.

In the discussion of the role of the town clerk as co-ordinator, Mr. Headrick draws a distinction between co-ordination of organization and co-ordination of development. The first question to determine is, if there is to be a co-ordinator, which officer of a local authority should he be. The author narrows the field to two, either the town clerk or the borough treasurer, and comes down firmly in favour of the former. In support he argues that the town clerk is at the centre of the committee preparation and activity, which is the core of the authority's executive machinery, and that he is furthermore the spokesman and chief means of contact with the world outside the authority, whereas the treasurer's preoccupation with the financial aspects of any matter provides, in the author's view, too narrow a standpoint for an effective co-ordinator. This conclusion follows generally the lines of the Coventry Report of the Treasury O. & M. team of a few years ago.

In advocating the co-ordination by the town clerk of council policy as distinct from organization, Mr. Headrick is raising a more controversial issue. Local government officers in England are so grounded in the doctrine that the determination of general policy is the province of the elected representative into which the official should not directly intermeddle, that the suggestion that any one of them should co-ordinate policy in any sense other than that of trying

to avoid overlapping as between one committee and another will find little support. If, however, what is really being advocated is the establishment, as is understood to be happening in Coventry and Manchester, of a special committee charged with responsibility for considering future developments and general co-ordination at committee level to which the town clerk would act as principal adviser, a greater measure of agreement amongst those actively engaged in local government in England is likely to be obtained.

The city manager concept, whilst perhaps tending towards increased efficiency in some respects, is generally not in accord with the longstanding traditions of English municipal life and therefore not likely to find acceptance either by councillors or officers.

J. WARING SAINSBURY.

NILOKHERI, by S. K. Dey; *Asia Publishing House*, 1962; pp. 128; 27s. 6d.

Nilokheri is the name of an Indian township created out of swampland and jungle to provide a secure home for some of the persons displaced as a result of partition.

This town would never have existed had it not been for the energy and enthusiasm of the author of this book, who is now India's Minister of Community Development and Co-operation. Mr. Dey tells what he describes as a "story of first love" in his characteristically vivid style. His work at Nilokheri provided one of the pilot projects out of which the present vast Indian community development programme has grown.

Nilokheri was intended to be a town developed by its people, a town without a police force, which would be a socialist island and a living experiment in community development. The concept behind this town was that all citizens should have "the right to live, the right to work for a living, and the right to receive what is earned". The appendix to this book gives the statistics of its growth up to 1961 when it had over 8,000 people.

Mr. Dey recounts in a highly personal style his difficulties in getting the project under way. Although his shrewdest thrusts are at the difficulties in the path of an enthusiast dealing with a bureaucratic machine, he is well aware that the ordinary person is by no means always a saint who will respond in the right way to ideal conditions. As he puts it, "so long as man remains man there will be wicked elements in the community who will have to be kept at bay". He adds, however, that "good administration should do this with the minimum display and exercise of the coercive power vested in it by the community".

It is not everyone who is so fortunate as to have the chance to put his ideas into practice and to learn from this the lessons of experience. This book's main value lies in its tales of personal experience which hold up a mirror to bureaucrat, planner and planned alike, and which may give food for thought to others engaged in planning new townships.

It should therefore be read not as a manual of administrative practice or of detailed analysis, but as the history of a project told by its initiator, which provides a useful source of case study material drawn from real life.

PETER DU SAUTOY.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING, by V. L. Griffiths; *Oxford University Press*, 1962; pp. vii + 118; 2s. 6d.

This is a new volume in the publishers' *New Africa Library*, and in keeping with the general aims of the series, it is written 'for the many people in all kinds of positions who want to have some say in national educational policy.' It would be difficult to find an author with wider and deeper experience of the problems than Mr. Griffiths, and all through the book we have the feeling that the author is writing with concrete examples in his mind.

Mr. Griffiths begins with two chapters dealing with the purposes and the basic ideas of educational planners. Chapters Three to Six deal with the aims which planners must set before them, Chapters Seven to Eleven with the means of achieving them. In an appendix, Mr. Griffiths gives as a practical example the plan which has actually been put forward by 'the leading political party in a small self-governing country', and comments on each section in the light of what he has said earlier in the book. He concludes his book with a useful index and glossary.

Very rightly, Mr. Griffiths begins by going back to first principles, and to hard political and economic facts. He says that the two main aims of an educational system in a modern state are that it should train people for jobs, and that it should produce people who co-operate together and understand national needs. From these arise practical questions on which people may disagree, such as whether all schools should be controlled by the government, or whether all children should be sent to the same kind of school. But since no country can afford to spend as much as it needs on education, there is a whole series of further questions on priorities and on making the best use of what resources there are. Chapters Three to Eleven take these questions one by one, and draw attention to the different points that must be considered. For example, in discussing universal literacy, Mr. Griffiths points out that literacy does not necessarily bring wisdom; that it is little use being able to read unless there is useful material for you to read, and you do in fact read it; and that nowadays the radio and television are a valuable supplement to reading. He follows this by suggesting three questions to put to planners who are making much of their country's need for universal literacy: (*a*) Is the shortest time any child stays at school still long enough for him to learn to read?; (*b*) Have adults strong reasons for wanting to be literate?; (*c*) What is there for the newly literate to read?

All through the book there is this same down-to-earth attitude, admirably shown in the final appendix with its formidable battery of questions on the plan which some unnamed ministry has produced. The book should be compulsory reading for all in Africa who are interested in education – and who is not? The book would be more readable, and its points easier to remember, if Mr. Griffiths were not so desperately self-effacing and discreet, so that when he would like to say, 'In the Sudan in 1948 . . .' he has to say 'Sometimes it may happen that . . .'. But that is not Mr. Griffiths's fault; very few of us are prepared to see any but our wisest or our luckiest ideas set out in cold print for the edification of others.

W. E. F. WARD.

THE BRITISH CABINET, by John P. Mackintosh; *Stevens, London*, 1962; pp.xi + 546; 50s.

To countries whose constitutions are founded on that of Britain, that significant characteristic of the British system, Cabinet government, is likely to remain a matter of continued interest. Whilst there are reliable and authentic works on the more formal aspects of Cabinet government which are capable of objective description and formulation, the actual character and practice of the Cabinet's internal methods and procedure is a subject on which little authentic information, official or otherwise, has ever been available. This is partly because of the secret manner in which the Cabinet conducts its business and partly because, being an informal institution, its internal procedures and relationships are not regulated by rules or even by fixed custom. Its methods and practice therefore tend to vary both with the personalities of different Prime Ministers and with varying circumstances, such as those of a major war or those of major reconstruction required in post-war periods. There is, however, always scope for the study of this more detailed and personal level of the activities and methods of individual Cabinets and their relations with departments of government, the Commons, the party and so on. This book by Mr. Mackintosh is intended to supersede the work of Professor Berriedale Keith on 'The British Cabinet System', but its main contribution is to supply details of these internal procedures and practices of British Cabinets from 1917, and more particularly from 1924, to 1950.

In the nature of things, the information required for this type of work has to be drawn from personal sources like memoirs. In this instance the author has relied to a considerable extent on what he calls (in a somewhat journalistic manner) 'interviews' with various ex-Prime Ministers, ex-ministers and senior civil servants. So far as such sources afford a basis for the exposition of the internal working of such institutions, he does it well, covering many of the significant activities of governments from Lloyd George's War Cabinet of 1916 to the very different kind of post-war Labour Cabinet of Mr. Attlee in 1945, attempting to illustrate such matters as the distribution of power within the Cabinet, its actual mode of making decisions, the type of matters decided by individual ministers and those which they submit for Cabinet approval, the peculiar position and influence of the Foreign Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer, the role of Cabinet committees, the relationship of the Cabinet to departments and ministers not represented in it, and its relationship with the Commons, its own party, and so on.

How far this sort of material forms a sound basis for historical study, however, may be doubted, and the allocation of the whole of the last part of this large book to such a treatment of the Cabinets since 1916 suggests (as do other things) that the author attributes too high an historical value to it. He has been able, however, to include more revealing matter than did Professor Keith, but he treats it too much as a narrative of successive episodes which gives it something of the air of political journalism.

His two chapters on the 19th century Cabinets, which deal with them chronologically, are informative and a useful addition to Keith's slimmer account. But some of the major principles which were at work underneath the surface of Cabinet development seem to be missed. For example, the remarkable preservation of the Cabinet's independent position despite the apparently increasing control and influence of the Commons and the electorate is not given

due emphasis; the constant Radical efforts to extend the legislature's control at the expense of the executive's is not mentioned, nor Gladstone's vigorous warnings from the 1850's to 1886 against the fatal dangers of mixing or confusing those two different provinces of government, and the author has omitted Keith's reference to Gladstone's position in 1846 as a Minister, though not a Member of Parliament, which has an important bearing on the executive's true position in the British system of government.

The book unhappily falls short of Keith's excellent work in several important respects, and despite its additional material on Cabinet procedures, it is no substitute for it. It is not easy, incidentally, to see what significant developments in Cabinet government have occurred since 1950 (to which date Keith's second edition extended) to warrant a further edition or new work. The Suez crisis seems to be the only major incident of relevance but the whole truth of that matter is not likely to be known for a long time.

The book does not appear to add anything of consequence to the earlier history of Cabinet development. One has further to say sadly that however ample the material on the 'domestic' management of Cabinets, some of Mr. Mackintosh's errors shake one's confidence in his historical equipment for his task. To take only two which occur in his first chapter. He tells us (page 8) that the Second Reform Bill of 1867 (which was notoriously the fruit of the manoeuvrings of the political parties and their leaders alone) was "the product of public demand". More surprisingly, he tells us (page 20) that the Parliament Act of 1911 "was clearly demanded by the electorate" when both elections of 1910, fought explicitly on this issue, radically reduced the Government's majority; indeed the second election in that year removed the Liberal Party's majority altogether, leaving the Labour and Irish Parties to constitute the majority alone. One of the things that most disturbed Mr. Asquith was the fact that in the English constituencies, as distinct from the Scottish and Irish, there was a majority against the Bill.

Although these points (and there are others) cast doubts on it's historical dependability, the book has much interesting and useful matter.

L. B.

NOTES ON EXTENSION IN AGRICULTURE, by Ivan G. Fay; *Asia Publishing House*, 1962; pp. 204; 25s.

This book, written by an American with Indian conditions in mind, is something of a rag-bag of a book, but, like many rag-bags, has some attractive pieces of material in it.

'Extension', in the American context, means the improvement of material and social conditions by bringing new knowledge and skills to people in ways which they will understand and helping them to help themselves. It has considerable affinity with the educational and 'communications' components of community development.

It is obvious that no agricultural improvement programme will work efficiently unless it is backed by the rural people; to achieve this support they must be helped fully to understand the programme and must be prepared to translate their understanding into practical action.

This book has put together, for students, information from a number of American and Indian sources on the practical techniques of extension education

of rural people in agriculture. It is much more concerned with the educational than the agricultural aspects and can, therefore, be read without difficulty by persons without specialist knowledge in agriculture. However, it reads rather jerkily, as if it had been compiled like a scrapbook, and its real use would be in class-room study chapter by chapter rather than in general reading. Indeed, each chapter is followed by questions for study and discussion.

While I am convinced that all administrators should nowadays have a working knowledge of the extension or communications field, since their programmes may well be received with public apathy or even hostility if they are not properly understood, I am not sure that this is necessarily the book to recommend to them. It is a little too specialized in its approach both geographically and in the level of writing.

For its purpose as a simple text-book for the beginner in a classroom situation it is adequate enough, but there is little in it that is sufficiently original to interest the specialist and it is by no means the first book on the subject that the ordinary person should be recommended to read.

PETER DU SAUTOY.

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA, by 'Wale Ademoyega; *George G. Harrap, London*, 1962; pp. 208; 15s.

An introduction to Nigeria, surveying its background from earliest times to independence.

ESSAYS ON THE RITUAL OF SOCIAL RELATIONS, edited by Max Gluckman; *Manchester University Press*, 1962; pp. vii + 190; 25s.

Four leading social anthropologists write about the significance of ritual in social relationships.

INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER, by Richard Harris; *Oxford University Press*, 1962; pp. 69; 7s. 6d.

An expression of views on some of the forces and motives behind current develoments in some under-developed countries.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAINING IN BRITAIN, AFRICA AND THE WEST INDIES. *Prepared in the Administrative Services Branch of the Department of Technical Co-operation, London: Miscellaneous Memorandum No. 5 of* 1962; pp. 37; free.

This is a revised edition of an earlier memorandum giving details of local government training facilities available to overseas students in Britain, Africa and the West Indies, based on information supplied by ministries, departments, universities and institutes concerned with this subject.

GHANA AGRICULTURE, by S. La Anyone; *Oxford University Press, Accra and London*, 1963; pp. xiv + 228; 25s.

The economic history and evolution of cultivation in Ghana, and the interplay of agricultural development and national prosperity, is traced from the earliest times.

THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL SCENE, edited by Robert O. Tilman and Taylor Cole; *Duke University Press, Durham, N.C., and Cambridge University Press, London*, 1962; pp. xii + 340; $10.00.

Twelve essays, drawing from the disciplines of anthropology, history, economics and political science, survey the Nigerian scene.

ECONOMIC SYSTEMS OF THE COMMONWEALTH, edited by Colvin B. Hoover; *Duke University Press, N.C., and Cambridge University Press, London*, 1962; pp. x + 538; $7.50.

Studies on eleven Commonwealth countries by local economists which discuss the extent to which national economic systems have departed from old-style capitalistic models.

THE DIARIES OF LORD LUGARD: Vol. IV, edited by Margery Perham and Mary Bull; *Faber and Faber, London*, 1963; pp. 444; 50s.

This is the final volume, covering two diaries written in the 1890's during travels in the future Nigeria.

The Organization of a Community Development Programme

PETER DU SAUTOY — 21*s net*

Mr. Peter du Sautoy was for some years Director of Social Welfare and Community Development for the Ghana Government. He describes the practical application of a community development programme in emerging nations, what principles to apply, and the various ways in which a community may learn and be assisted to help itself. Throughout, the author has in mind the contribution expected of the officer in the field, his problems, and the aids which he needs to achieve success.

Training for Community Development

A Critical Study of Method

T. R. BATTEN — 22*s* 6*d net*

In the first part of this book the author examines recent trends in community development training, which, he suggests, are the result of a growing awareness of past inadequacies in training programmes. Even now much of the training provided is unsatisfactory, particularly the human relations training, and that kind of orientation training which aims at influencing people's attitudes and relationships. In Part Two the author investigates the causes of these difficulties and reaches conclusions about what changes are needed to overcome them. In Part Three he amplifies his conclusions, describing in detail the methods and techniques developed in the community development training course at the University of London Institute of Education over the past twelve years.

Educational and Occupational Selection in West Africa

Edited by A. TAYLOR — 25*s net*

The whole field of selection in British West Africa is reviewed, not only by overseas consultants, but also by those who are actively engaged in the process locally. Methods of selection for educational, Civil Service, armed forces, commercial, and industrial purposes are dealt with. Comparisons are made with methods in use in other countries. Concrete proposals are put forward for making present methods more effective. The conclusions reached at the conference indicate the extent of the work which remains to be done, and gives some indication of the ways in which it may be carried out.

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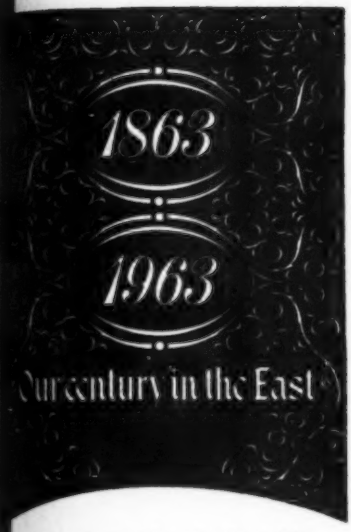

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